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VACATION

RAMBLES AND THOUGHTS.

VACATION

RAMBLES AND THOUGHTS;

COMPRISING THE

RECOLLECTIONS OF THREE CONTINENTAL TOURS,

IN THE VACATIONS OF 1841, 1842 AND 1843.

By T. N. TALFOURD, D.C.L.

SERGEANT-AT-LAW.

ROYAL ASIATIC

"All in the broad highway of the world."—WORDSWORTH.

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SECOND EDITION.

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DEDICATORY EPISTLE

TO

ROBERT VAUGHAN RICHARDS, Esq.

ONE OF HER MAJESTY'S COUNSEL.

My dear Richards,

Among the inducements which tempt me to publish the Recollections of my Continental Excursions, with some thoughts suggested during their progress, one of the most fascinating is the desire of offering to you a token of my imperishable sense of the comfort I have derived from your friendship during the labours of many years which we have endured together, and of my earnest wish that, in your retirement from the toils, of which these were a portion, you may enjoy all the blessings which can sweeten and dignify this life's repose. As I have often been strengthened for the performance of arduous professional duty by your counsel and encouragement, I would, on the eve of presenting my holiday reminiscences to the world, linger for a few moments in the old shelter of your society, and take courage by addressing to your partial ears the few sentences in which I may explain the circumstances, and confess the motives of my venture ; as if I could fancy that you alone would judge them.

To the first part of these "Recollections," you are not

a stranger. Having, at the distance of some months from the completion of the first tour, indulged myself by gathering up the fragments of the precious hours engaged in its progress, only for my own gratification, and that of my children, I scarcely know how I was induced to print them, except from that love of seeing one's effusions in fair print rather than in ugly manuscript, which Lord Byron has so pleasantly confessed, and which derives additional force when the charm of print is felt through the beautiful type of Messrs. Bradbury & Evans. The "Recollections of a First Visit to the Alps" were, therefore, printed merely for private distribution, with a domestic Dedication, which you will feel to be sacred, and which, therefore, I have reprinted now, although it obliges me to except the first Part out of my offering to you, and to limit my present Dedication to the two last tours,—of the truth of some scenes of which I might summon you as a witness. This little unpublished book received so cordial a welcome from those who perused it, that I was flattered into believing that it would be a pity if the recollections of the two succeeding Vacations should be left to glide away without any other vestiges by which I might myself recover them, than the slight notes I had made—scarcely legible by myself, and capable of interpretation by no one else—during their rapid but delicious journeys. When, therefore, I found myself, in the last Vacation, resting and expatiating in the home scenery of our own lakes, endeared to me by the neighbourhood of the great Poet, to whose fame, you know, I have omitted no opportunity of contributing (one object of my life in which I rejoice not to have lived in vain)—I determined to employ the time not engaged in the enjoyment of *his* society, or of the country which his genius

has consecrated, in recalling the hours of the last two years, spent among mightier, but not lovelier scenes. The recollections of the two last tours, therefore, committed to paper respectively, after a lapse of one and two years, assumed a graver aspect than the vivacity of a cotemporaneous journal, and tempted me again to the press. The matter, however, had grown so large as to render the printing of it for private circulation a more costly luxury than I had a right to indulge in; and I felt, besides, that I had interwoven with my own recollections opinions on men and books which happened to arise on my travels, which I ought not to place in any extent of circulation, without submitting to the just responsibility which attends an appearance at the bar of criticism; and also, that I had received too much favour, on former occasions, from my countrymen, to shrink from offering to them all I could properly submit to an extensive circle of friends. On these considerations, and in the prospect of offering to you a dedication with an exception which, I know, will, in your kind regard, rather enhance the value of the residue, I have resolved to submit these Recollections and Thoughts to the world; which if often necessarily personal, at least are connected with my happier and better self—not with the cares and vexations of a professional course, but with the feelings which, poor and common in themselves, may become interesting when associated with the silent grandeur of the scenes among which they were suggested.

And now, my dear RICHARDS, let me, whatever may be the fate of my book, snatch and secure from fate and fortune my own reward in the opportunity of wishing all good to you and yours: and, though I trust that you will long survive

the public and general knowledge of these frail memorials of happy hours, I indulge the hope that some few copies of this slight work, treasured up by those who will regard it beyond its literary value, will prolong that connexion of our names which has been to me so often support in struggle ; consolation in defeat ; and the happiest incident of success.

In this hope, I remain,

My dear RICHARDS,

Your faithful and affectionate Friend,

T. N. TALFOURD.

London, Dec. 20th, 1844.

PREFACE

TO THE SECOND EDITION.

THE unexpected favour which has attended the first edition of this slender work, has afforded me this early opportunity of reprinting it in a cheaper form. Having published it with much misgiving, lest the familiarity of the scenes it depicts and the personal nature of the details of travel among them, should excite censure, I have felt more than an author's usual gratitude for indulgent criticism to those who, being strangers to me, have taken that cordial interest in my holiday pleasures which has influenced their genial notices. I have been strongly tempted to evince that gratitude by removing some blemishes which they have good-naturedly pointed out; but, on the whole, I have preferred to look upon faults, which have been treated thus kindly, almost with regard, and have confined my corrections to the excision of a few superfluous epithets, and the removal of some verbal errors.

Since the first edition was published, I have been favoured with copies of the Narratives of the Ascent of Mont Blanc by Mr. Aldjo, Mr. Fellowes, and Mr. Henry Martin Atkins, the two last privately printed; and have enjoyed them with the unenvying regard of an unsuccessful follower in their steps, and with great admiration of the vividness of each. I take the liberty of mentioning them here, from the confirmation which each affords to my belief that the surface of the mountain-snows had changed before my attempt, so as greatly to lessen its perils. Mr. Fellowes ascended in

July, 1827; Mr. Aldjo in the August of the same year; Mr. Atkins in August, 1837; and each, not only by detailed description, but by the pictures with which his work is illustrated, represents formidable chasms, cliffs, and walls of ice, intercepting his progress, where I only found an easy slope of snow. Each also represents the ascent of the Grands Mulets as more lofty and difficult than it appears to my memory; and thus confirms the theory that a deep crust of snow had buried the brilliant irregularity of the glaciers many fathoms deep, and made my path easy. Mr. Atkins was the youngest adventurer who has succeeded in reaching the summit, being scarcely nineteen years of age when he attained it; and his narrative is distinguished by a boyish simplicity and freshness, which recal to recollection the praise bestowed on that of the young hero of "*Douglas*,"

"Surely never tale
Was with such gallant modesty rehearsed."

Alas! the parallel does not stop with the praise. A melancholy page, appended to his narrative, informs us that, having entered the Army and become a Lieutenant in the 53d Regiment, he was borne to his grave with military honours at Edinburgh, before he had completed his 24th year;—leaving to his surviving friends, in this unstudied picture of youthful enthusiasm and success, the memorial of as simple and as noble a nature as ever was removed early from the trials and the cares of this world.

T. N. T.

London, 15th April, 1845.

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RECOLLECTIONS

OF

A FIRST VISIT TO THE ALPS.

TO

HER

WHOSE IMAGE ENDEARS THE RECOLLECTIONS

OF A DELIGHTFUL TOUR,

AS IT CHEERS AND GRACES

THE JOURNEY OF LIFE,

These "Trivial Fond Records"

ARE INSCRIBED,

BY

A GRATEFUL AND ADMIRING HUSBAND.

RECOLLECTIONS

OF

A FIRST VISIT TO THE ALPS.

CHAPTER I.

JOURNEY FROM LONDON TO PARIS.

Passports—Line of the Southampton Railway—Southampton—Netley Abbey—Voyage from Southampton to Havre—Havre—The Seine to Rouen—Rouen—The Seine to St. Germain—Arrival at Paris.

ON Saturday, 14th August, WE—*i. e.* my wife, our eldest son, our niece, M—— E——, and myself, started from home on a Tour of which Switzerland and its Alps were the great and final objects. We had taken one ravishing glimpse of Switzerland in the preceding autumn, in an excursion to the great Rhine-fall, whence we were obliged to return, leaving the Alps unvisited and unseen, or seen at such distances as rendered it doubtful whether they were mountains or clouds. This year we resolved to avail ourselves of the "*extra week*" which royal events seldom fail to add to the summer holidays of the Eton boys—among whose happy number ours was one—and which thus, with the unspent residue, gave to father and son about a month of cotemporary vacation—to penetrate to the midst of those icy sublimities, the knowledge of which I anticipated almost as the opening of a new sense, or the entrance to a new world. The morning was chilly and wet, but it brightened

into a charming day. At ten o'clock we left home with little luggage, as the world accounts luggage, but even more than we required, and a Foreign-office passport, which we were induced to believe would prove a talisman against all the impertinences of Continental police; all the exactions of *commissionnaires;* and all the delays interposed by too fond landlords solicitous to turn griefs into commodities. Alas! its virtues were all in speculation;—and we soon found ourselves in no better condition than travellers who had not obtained so flattering a recommendation to the care of foreign powers. Surely the system of passports is wholly unworthy of civilised, peaceful Europe in the nineteenth century! If any security could be attained by it against the admission of dangerous persons, or if any fees were really derived from it, some excuse might be found for its continuance, but it is entirely provoking, because it does no one any good. The most insinuating swindler, or the most quixotic regicide, would have no difficulty in obtaining passports for any State in Europe; the *visa* is only *idem per idem;*—so that it is difficult to imagine any safeguard which the system confers on the potentates who sustain it. Nor, generally speaking, are any solid benefits conferred on any one in the shape of fees;—for though money is often exacted from the traveller, fevered with impatience to pass onward or homeward, to expedite the delivery of his frail voucher, it generally goes into the pocket of the lounger and thief of the inn, and rarely even attains the desk of a poor clerk in the office whence the paper comes. When the exaction of the state is really pecuniary, it may be submitted to with less vexation—it is sensible though shabby. Thus, when that miserable sovereign of a glorious realm, the king of Sardinia, causes it to be distinctly understood that you must pay his Consul four francs for permission to go from Geneva to Chamouni, you pay the "Royal Merchant" without grudging. He has Mont Blanc to exhibit; you cannot see it without his licence—and you pay the

showman without any feeling that you are imposed on. If it is true that 3,000 persons annually visit Chamouni, he, or his Consul, must make a nice little income by the impost; and so far so good. But when you are detained, as we were last year at Strasbourg a whole day, because the passport could not be obtained from the office till nine o'clock, and the steamboat started at eight, with the painful doubt whether our courteous landlord had not invented the difficulty to ensure the protracted honour of our company—and with the certainty that no officer ever looked at the passport at all—the entire suavity of temper which Mr. Murray recommends to all travellers, is in some danger of being broken. In truth, the whole is a vexatious farce—very foolish in the States, which profit by English gold—and very annoying to the travellers who are eager to scatter it.

But I am anticipating our misfortunes; at present we are on English ground; and very beautiful it is—for we are gliding along the Southampton Railway in a first-class carriage, with a window, that is, a thousand lovely little pictures, at the command of each. Exactly at eleven o'clock we bounded from the station at Vauxhall—exactly at two we were discharged in view of the Southampton Water, and the low but lovely accompaniments in which it is set as a mirror. A great part of this line dazzles with a succession of charming pictures. First there are the swelling hillocks and willow-embedded villas of Wandsworth; then trim meadows lit up by a lucid winding stream, losing itself on either side of the terraced way amidst clumps of greenest trees; then a long course of heaths crowned with airy hills, and all blushing, along the border of the way, with the sweet pink heather, redolent of Scotland, which daintily loses itself among the scattered groves; and when the country grows barren, and the railroad passes between banks of chalk and gravel, its tedium is dispelled by the view of Basingstoke on one side, deep in the valley, and by the ruin of the Holy Ghost Chapel on the other, close to

the Station. The lower view has little to interest the mass of passengers; but to me it has a solemn dream-like aspect, for there I passed some of my earliest school-days, when, a child of some ten years old, I first left my paternal roof at Reading; and I have never since entered the town—a period of more than thirty-five years! The few images I can recall from these old times are dreamy and sad; for there crabbed sectarianism, at once active and stern, cradled all the thoughts of childhood: and I look along the level plain which the railway skirts, and try, almost in vain, to trace the course of some of our long walks—to Basing Park—or to Sherburne, the dearer, because almost the only pleasure we were permitted to enjoy. The ruin, however, I remember well, standing on a heap of confused graves, beside a dark lane, at the entrance of the town; then to me a romantic height—now all laid bare to the railroad, an object for a moment's glance. It is very slight; a low tower and one wall of brick thinly cased with stone, pierced by three windows; but it has exquisite elegance and grace. Quitting Basingstoke, the road passes through an uninteresting country till it approaches Winchester; then we see the old grey square tower amidst the chalky hills, and think of the long succession of blithe students who have studied and wept, and played, and aspired, and been happy, almost beneath its shadow—noble union of the association of antiquity and youth! The whole way from Winchester to Southampton, through a valley opening to the sea, and by the side of a river, widening as it approaches its mouth, is lovely. There is one spot on the right-hand side of the road, where the vale opens into a small crescent, edged with a bank of most graceful trees, and beneath them, rimmed by the full, lucid, narrow stream, following the bend of the foliage with exactest nicety, which is the very perfection of small, low, wood-enriched meadow scenery. On our arrival at Southampton, we straggled through a broiling sun to the good inn—one of the few which will

outlast the railroad revolution—"The Dolphin;" ordered dinner; learned that the steamboats—one French, one English—started for Havre at six; decided in favour of our own countryman, "The Grand Turk;" secured our berths, with the liberty of being wretched for twenty-four hours, at the absurdly cheap price of 4*s.* each; and made the most of our interval of ease by enriching it with a visit to Netley Abbey.

After refusing to wait the return of a faithless fly, which had taken advantage of our momentary absence to convey a family to the pier, we leaped into a vehicle worthy of the name, which started with us at a charming pace. We were somewhat startled to find that we had to cross a creek, which was in truth the mouth of the little river whose downward course we had been pursuing in a ferry-boat; but we found the arrangements excellent, and ourselves, fly, horse and all, in five minutes on the opposite shore. From hence to the Abbey we enjoyed a charming rural ride—now over a bit of common, now through a shaded lane, with hints of the sea to the right; and recollect especially one turn of the road up a gentle hill, disclosing rugged ground covered with heather in pinkest bloom—miniature Trosachs, dazzling with confused reminiscences of Scotland—and presently bringing in view a pretty mockery of a lake with jagged banks, which might be Loch Keturine seen through a diminishing lens. If these beauties were small, the ruin to which they led was not, but might have held sway amidst the mightiest scenery. It is the vastest of our Abbey Ruins, like Chepstow among our Castles. The great gaunt masses of stone look as if giant power had rent them—as if they had been broken by other than mortal hands or mortal engines. The vegetation which mingles with them is in noble keeping with this character. The trees which grow freely within the great expanse of the chapel are not gentle companions of the stone, but rise in native independence from the ground, scorning the broken pave-

ment, and towering freely towards the sky. Through a huge window—that is, a great jagged opening of the stone which a window once inhabited—you see a bold bank descending, on which coarse rank grass and tares wave in sturdy luxuriance. There cannot be a more decided contrast between two things having a common name and old associations in common, than between this vast shell of ancient pride and pomp, and the fair, neat, trim grace of Tintern. It is, like a mammoth among fossils, an elephantine record of the past. We had short time to examine it—yet sufficient: for it is not a ruin of exquisite detail, but of heroic, single, powerful impression; and this perhaps is better conveyed by a glance—better grasped by one effort of the excited mind, than obtained by minute inspection. We returned to our inn as swiftly and as pleasantly as we went; delighting in the achievement of a new and mighty image; and satisfied that the hour and three quarters, between a quarter before three and half-past four, which the excursion occupied, "had life and food for future years."

A good substantial dinner at the "Dolphin," accompanied by port wine which would have been excellent if it had not had the fatal curse of sweetness, was despatched just in time for another fly to convey us to the packet. Unfortunately for me, I found time to take "an infallible specific against sea-sickness," in the shape of some drops of essence of tar, in fond reliance on which I trod the deck of "The Grand Turk" with a light heart, notwithstanding some tastes of tar which did not give me a relish for a naval life. The declining sun shed sweet but watery beams along the low wood-crowned banks of the Southampton Water; light rain began to drizzle; but I grew confident in the potency of my charm. Alas! the old rule "*Naturam expellas furcâ*," &c., held good in my case. It is true that the tar did avert sickness which else would have arisen; but it held the enemy bound in as with a clasp of iron; and the

sensations were more intolerable, if that can be, than those they prevented. Till twelve, amidst drizzle and in cold, I walked the deck;—then, from mere cold, sought the shelf on which I was destined to lay my misery;—and, at four, unrefreshed and distracted with headache, I sought the deck for variety of pain. Here the charm gave way; I was naturally ill—only worse than usual—and so continued until about seven in the morning, when we reached the quay at Havre. Here, having left our passport in the hands of the police, we stepped on shore, and encountered a tribe of ragged boys, jabbering, pushing, shoving cards into our hands and faces—the eager panegyrists of some twenty wretched hotels. We had been advised to prefer the Hôtel de l'Europe by a sprightly midshipman, who had leave of absence from his ship at Portsmouth for a week, which he proposed to spend at Havre. One of our plagues, an elder and sedater scoundrel than the others, conducted us to the right hotel; but, when there, informed us it was full; and endeavoured to locate us in an opposite hostelry of very strange appearance; but, after some bustle, we were shown into the *salle-à-manger* of the proper hotel, and promised apartments at some indefinite period when they could be got ready. Oh, the miseries of the half-hour that elapsed before that promise was performed! It is not often one recollects mere personal inconveniences—they flit away, whilst recollections of enjoyment remain and deepen—but this interval of wretchedness cannot be forgotten. Unwashed, unshaved, uncombed—still faint with the remains of sickness—pestered with the receding taste of the tar poison—baked in the sun—tired of the crowd of *commissionnaires* and beggars—hungry, thirsty, perplexed and out of temper, amidst the remains of a just finished breakfast, and unable to obtain an answer, I thought myself a sad example to all "livers out of Britain," who could live in it. Such misery, however, could not last in Candide's "best of all possible worlds;"—so it vanished by degrees;

—soap and water were indicated;—and soon a dish of cutlets and some tolerable coffee made what remained of wretchedness endurable, and a bottle of brisk *vin ordinaire* chased it away. After breakfast, we went out to see the town;—which I thought the most striking piece of outlandish civic picture I had ever seen;—and, even after seeing Rouen, I think it the most peculiar, and most unlike all we see at home. It is a city for a dream.

Stretched along the margin of a quay, indented by three basins crowded with ships, it resounds with the babble of all languages—French, or a jabber which passes for it, Dutch, Russian, German, English; and swarms with sailors and traders in costumes to match, made more grotesque by a liberal intermixture of Jews. The houses tall, gaunt —all alive with windows, indicating the dense population within—are of colours as various as the dialects; red, yellow, brown, black, dingy white, yet all seemingly baked together by the sun, and flaunting in a kind of rude harmony. They rise to seven or eight stories, like the houses in the Old Town of Edinburgh; and often perched above all is a lonely attic, so small that one wonders who can live there—

> Hanging so light, and hanging so high,
> On the topmost ridge that looks up at the sky.

The bustle of the quay is also diversified by shops, which are aviaries—all gay with innumerable birds of the most beautiful plumage, chiefly caged, but some regal-looking parroquets stand out on perches, and pretend to be at liberty, but who, alas! are fast chained to their thrones. One broad and busy street passes through the middle of the city, garnished with shops, and shows a crowning hill, capped with villas, in the distance. The other streets which bisect the interior are generally so narrow, that the sky is only visible as through a slit at the top; but they are very picturesque in their way; Heaven help those who dwell in them! A mound and trench inserted within it surround the city on all sides except its seaward front: and

the green bank, scanty though the grass is, looks refreshing when seen, as it sometimes is, at the extremity of the suffocating alleys which branch out from the central street. We passed the moat at the end of this street by a drawbridge, duly guarded against nobody, and, seated on the opposite mound, looked out on the suburb beyond. The hill which we had seen disclosed from the street now appeared a high circling bank, like that on which Bath or Lisbon stands, rising to the height (as we guessed) of 1000 feet, and covered with trees, with which houses were interspersed: and which, but that the trees were not very green, nor the houses very white, would have been really fine. As it was, we were not tempted to climb it, in the sun and the dust, and contented ourselves with determining that there must be a splendid view from the summit, of the sea, the Seine, and the strange town of Havre, which may be designated not as French, but as "outlandish." Although the shops, though it was Sunday, were all open, and the natives, because it was Sunday, were attired in their best clothes, we found it a hard matter to get rid of the long and heavy interval between the morning service, during part of which we stood amidst a dense crowd in the principal church, and the table d'hôte at five, which, hungry and exhausted, we expected with unusual eagerness. Dinner, however, which "comes" or should come "to all," came at last to us; and though the refection was more shadowy than we afterwards enjoyed at other such social tables, it put us in good heart and humour, and enabled us to endure a concert afterwards. It was an instrumental concert given in an open square, in which a *roundabout* invited to a giddy mimicry of chivalry, the aspirants being whirled round on wooden horses, and armed with lances to dislodge some cups or balls hung up before them; and in which also the various apparatus of gymnastic exercise, poles, ladders, wooden horses, and parallel bars, bespoke the healthful and delightful recreations of the youths of the

town and of the college. One of the latter, a tall young man of twenty, in the dark-green uniform of the school, who had made acquaintance with our social sailor, and readily extended it to us, strongly urged us to stay till Wednesday, when the pupils would receive their prizes from the hands of the mayor of Havre, and offered to obtain us tickets to hear the examination and witness its issue. He pressed it so modestly, that it was really a pity to refuse; and if our time had permitted, in spite of the ennui of another day at Havre, we should scarcely have had the heart to do it; but selfishness and the Seine prevailed. We learned afterwards that he, though an Englishman, who had voluntarily placed himself at this school to obtain a solid and cheap education, had obtained the first prize; and had been crowned with a wreath, laurel in form and silver in substance, before the assembled beauty and fashion of Havre; some presage of which triumph doubtless animated his wish that his new acquaintances should witness the ceremonial. Although "the night was chilly and not dark," therefore not the night for fireworks or a concert in the open air, we enjoyed the scene as well as our fatigue would permit; the music, all instrumental, was stirring, and the fireworks well intended, if not well executed. On our return to the hotel, we took coffee in our hostess's parlour, and after resisting the importunities of our sailor friend "to stay one more day," bade him farewell, and settled all matters, even to paying for our breakfast, that we might be ready for the steam-boat, which was to start at seven on the following morning for Rouen. We fancied our young acquaintance would be very dull without us, and find his week's holiday a very oppressive thing in a town of strangers. I was led to philosophise on the general infelicity of holidays; how much ennui there is in the very heart of them; how, if we could abstract from them the pains of expectation, listlessness, hunger, and especially consider how great an object dinner is in the midst of them, we should arrive at the con-

clusion that our busiest days are the happiest. Surely, we thought, this youth might have found more amusement among his shipmates at Portsmouth, than in this strange town—to spend, or rather linger, a week, in which he endures two nights' voyages, and spends money he can ill spare. This strain of reflection was plausible, but, we afterwards found, wholly inapplicable to the individual case; for "our unhappy friend" liked Havre so well, that he sent home for further leave, and more money; struck up an innocent friendship with the landlady of the hotel; and accompanied her to a grand masked ball, at which he appeared as an opera-dancing girl, in pink stockings and short petticoats, and she as an English jockey, "and all things changed to their contraries." So our philosophy was misplaced, and our pity thrown away.

The next morning we rose at five, to be in time for the steam-boat—took a hasty breakfast—and hurried to the quay. There had been rain in the night which still drizzled on us, so that we embarked with minds tuned to the endurance of a dull day; but happily our fortitude was not required. The morning brightened into a sober serenity as we advanced into the open sea; grew lovely as the finely-defined mouth of the Seine grew palpable before us; and the weather continued from that time brilliant until we quitted France. Nothing could be more charming than the voyage to Rouen, which we reached by two o'clock. The Seine, with its banks, far exceeded my expectations, which, having been accustomed to take my notion of it from writers who have represented it at Paris as far inferior to the Thames at London, were very unworthy of the truth. It has not, perhaps, any portion equal in interest to the Rhine between Bingen and Bonn, where its mighty waters pour their collected force through a channel which, noble in breadth, is narrow compared with its fields of waters above and its great expanse below; where both sides rise into majesty; and every rocky promontory towers into a castle of old time; but its uniform course is far fairer, and its

body of water scarcely inferior, at least as it expands to the eye. It has besides, the three epic incidents of a beginning, a middle, and an end ; in which last the Rhine lamentably fails. The Rhine, when contemplated in its entire course, too painfully reminds me of the history of some great intellect generously impelled and haunted by phantoms of nobleness, but undirected by constancy to one worthy aim. It gushes into lusty life—rejoices in its strength—reflects great images in its course, which are but shadowed on it, not abiding on its bosom—dallies among fair islands, dissipating its strength by dividing its power—makes a stupendous effort to master a rocky barrier, and triumphantly succeeds—but, after all, instead of meeting the ocean in pomp worthy of its greatness, wastes itself in several low sandy outlets, and loses its very name, or retains it only doubtfully, in some small Dutch-degraded channel. The Seine, on the contrary, in fitting expanse, but with individual power, mingles with the sea attended by its two great ports, and has an end worthy of its course. The bank on the right is beautifully wooded, disclosing some scenes of surpassing loveliness, where the hills swell round some narrow indentation, delighting the eye with a series of circles, of which I chiefly remember one, where the three mounds, heaving with luxuriant coppice-wood, are crowned by a windmill, and rimmed by the broad stream looking almost as green as the hills, and reflecting their lowest fringes. The sinuosities of the river are enormous—sometimes approaching a perfect circle ; but the progress through them has this peculiarity, that, as the bending of the elevated ground marks the course of the river, you can map them for miles before you, and thus acquire and retain a continuous image of the river ; which you cannot hope for when it is broken, like the Wye or the Rhine, into a succession of pictures, each being that of a small oblong lake inclosed by lofty hills, from which the water seems to have no outlet. The left bank, generally open, is delicately

fringed by bushes, and often purple with tall flowers, refreshing without obstructing the eye. The right bank, almost always walled by mountain, is not merely wooded, but sometimes broken by huge red rocks, pierced by strange caverns, and sometimes moulded into large grassy buttresses, one following the other with strange resemblance, as if Nature took a freak of uniformity in compliment to the French classical drama.

Rouen, enthroned beside this noble river, is one of the most interesting and romantic of cities. You can scarcely believe it French, except in the gaiety with which its population seems to pour into the quay and streets at sunset, all hearts-ease and careless grace. Forming a splendid terrace in front of the Seine, and thence built closely on the slope of a hill, it contrasts all the airiness and flaunting grace of a luxurious capital with the densely-lodged industry of a busy people. The streets which, opening on the quay, extend up the hill, are as narrow and lofty, though not individually so picturesque, as those of Havre. Looking up them, you seem to be looking into a human hive ; but they are graced with many vestiges of old time ; and above them, in the midst, rise the venerable towers of the cathedral and of the church of St. Ouen, carrying the thought back into long past days, or upwards to heaven. We visited these stately edifices under the conduct of a Catholic priest —an Irishman, doubtless, by birth, but by office an American Catholic bishop—of great heartiness of manner and intelligence ; who discoursed of these monumental triumphs of his faith with equal good taste and good humour. The cathedral is fine in parts, but not as a whole equal to several we have seen, and yielding in simple grandeur to the church of St. Ouen ; which we felt, with our reverend companion, to be the very perfection of Gothic church architecture. Its interior, seen at a glance, combines a Grecian singleness of purpose with Gothic venerableness of sentiment ; the grey arches springing to the roof as into heaven, without a flaw

or variation, as if all sprung winged into perfect beauty at one happy impulse of inspiration, and grew time-honoured, not time-changed. If there is not the airy sweetness of that angelic interior of the cathedral of Cologne, there is more entireness for the eye, the mind, and the heart, to embrace at once and to hold for ever. We had also a hasty glance of another and very different chancel, all violet and gold, surmounted with painted windows, "red with the blood of kings and queens," a sacred boudoir, the luxurious figures of a dream. With difficulty, by the same kind assistance, we found the Place de la Pucelle, where a miserable statue over a pump marks the spot where the heroic Maid of Orleans triumphed in mortal suffering—to England's eternal shame. I wonder the anti-British feeling does not overcome all others, and give to this brave woman the sculptured honours which greater feelings exist not to yield. But these are the countrymen of that brilliant scoffer, who turned her heroic story into lasciviousness, and, in his hatred to all greatness, included even the female victim of English spite!

We dined at the table d'hôte of the hôtel, where we found a good French dinner, but prolonged by the etiquette of the establishment, which required that every dish should be submitted to the landlady (who sat in the centre of the table), and carved by her fair hands, before it was handed to her hungry guests; a process which, as she did not partake of the viands, could scarcely have been gratifying to her; and which was very annoying to all who were either in want of their dinner, or anxious to get away. We combined both these elements of impatience; for we had learned from an Englishman at table that the theatre would be opened "for that night only," for the benefit of a company of provincial actors, whose performances had been interrupted some fortnight before by a riot in the house: to which they, of course, were no parties; but which had led to the stoppage of their performances, and with them of

their dinners, by the police, who had so far relented as to allow them to play and sing for their suppers on this one evening. We felt the distress of these "poor players"—a gentle craft all the world over; more than that, of a young Englishman, who had taken part in the disturbance, and had been, by summary process, consigned for two days to the miseries of a filthy dungeon, which he had shared with some very unquestionable characters, and whence he had emerged "a sadder," if not "a wiser, man." After dinner, the long pauses of which were relieved by some excellent light wine, we sallied forth for the theatre; but were almost diverted from our theatrical purposes by the beauty of the scene into which we emerged from the dominion of our hostess. The city, steeped in the evening light, looked more lovely than beneath the scorching sun: below the great stone bridge, vessels, peopling but not hiding the river, shot up their tall masts into the roseate sky; above it the river spread itself out in rippleless crystal, between the tall buildings and far onward between avenues of trees, amidst which lamps were beginning to sparkle; and along the quay, clustering to talk, or hastening into the fair-arched walks, were crowds of lightly-dressed and light-hearted lads and lasses, eager to enjoy the pleasure of contrast from their dark and cell-like homes. We were bent, however, on our theatrical career; and exchanged the airy scene without for places in a theatre, which was more airy than we wished to see it within. The performance, two vaudevilles and a concert, was respectable; but chiefly interesting from the obvious consciousness of the poor actors, that they were attempting parts a little above themselves, their struggles to do their very best, and the good nature with which they were applauded when that best was not very good. We returned to bed; but scarcely to sleep; for the steam-boat was to start at five; and, lest we should not be in time, we were roused soon after three. The morning, however, was delicious, crisp not cold, at least

only so cold as to make a walk to the furthest bridge, along the edge of the sleeping city and lucid river to the boat, an excellent preparative for our voyage. We found a steam-boat, a long narrow vessel, admirably formed to cut through the opposing current, moored by the right-hand side of the river, beneath a noble avenue of trees ; and precisely as the clock of the cathedral chimed five, started for Paris. From hence to St. Germain, which we reached between six and seven in the evening, our course was one long dream of lucid and sylvan beauty. To the feeling of lazy luxury which pervaded this long and delightful day the broken rest of the preceding night no doubt contributed, as it seemed to justify its indulgence. The scenery was most appropriate to the sensation ; not so fine as that between Havre and Rouen ; and, indeed, rarely so fine as to challenge active admiration, or entail its slight fatigue : the hills seemed to glide away, subsiding in gentle undulations ; island after island opened before us, tufted with willow and brushwood, and sometimes flushed with red and purple blooms ; and the eye glided through lanes of water, skirted by rich wood, like winding paths, through a lovely woodland country, far inland. Nor did we lack proper comforts for the body, to sustain and soften the enchantment. About seven we "sat down to an excellent breakfast," which our young gentleman, in the exercise of a discretion with which he had been wisely invested, ordered—a large cold roast fowl, broiled ham, and eggs nestling in a white napkin, like chestnuts with us, with excellent coffee ; to which was added, "by particular desire," a bottle of good Rhenish. About two o'clock, our party, excepting my wife, who, with heroic self-denial, reserved herself for a Parisian supper, partook of a little dinner, admirably dressed, quite as good as anything we enjoyed in our whole experience of continental cookery—a thin beef-steak, thoroughly broiled (or fried as the case might be), with sauce of parsley and butter, and a cold cream-chicken-salad, prettily decorated with thinly-

striped beet-root, and as good as it looked ; all which, accompanied by a bottle of Almashauser wine, aided mightily to preserve the harmony of sensations.

I was awakened, indeed, into a more vivid sense of reality, on the approach of the boat to Mantes, with its cathedral and bridge. The cathedral, perched on high, in dull red majesty, seemed to open its round windows like eyes of obscure faith to the skies ; and the bridge, connecting the city with an island waving with tall trees, of noble arches, spanning the clear, broad, brimming stream, looked like a gigantic copy of ours at Richmond. This excitement, however, soon died away, and I sank again into " that loving languor which is *quite* repose," until, just as the golden hues of evening were beginning to fade, we reached the railway station at St. Germain, where all the petty machines of torment, examinations of luggage and passports, seemed doubly vexatious from the gentle lassitude of the voyage which preceded them. We waited till seven ; and then, packed in railway carriages, not quite so comfortable as those of the Great Western, were conveyed to Paris. The thickening gloom of evening prevented us from discerning much of the objects through which we were whirled until we were set down at the barrier, to endure the delay of half an hour, while our passport and our little luggage waited their turn for examination. At last we were informed that we had liberty to take our bag and depart ; of which we availed ourselves by securing a hackney-coach, and driving through streets (of which we could no more form an adequate notion than a country lad, set down at Islington and driven to St. Paul's, could of the streets of London), to Meurice's Hotel. There we were informed by Madame Meurice, a portly landlady of the English order of Corinthian landladies, that we could not be accommodated with rooms in her hotel ; but were referred to the Hôtel Wagram in the same line of street, where we might procure lodging, while the liberty of trans-

acting the most important business of the day—dinner, at the table d'bôte of the "fat, fair, and fifty" hostess—was hospitably reserved to us. In a few minutes we found ourselves in a handsome saloon, up four staircases, in the "Hôtel Wagram," selected our bed-rooms, ordered supper, and, looking out of window with eager eyes into the Parisian darkness, saw by the gleam of the lamps the variegated uniform of two soldiers, who, far below, guarded the opposite gate of the garden of the Tuileries ; the great bulk of the palace, shelving to the left ; the confused tops of trees, in the vast space before us ; and far beyond, the Pont Royal and the lofty lights of the houses beyond the Seine, bewitching the fancy with vague ideas of the airy splendour of this gayest and most festal of cities.

CHAPTER II.

PARIS.

First Glimpse of Paris—First Stroll in Paris—The Théâtre Porte St. Martin—Representation of "Ruy Blas"—The Louvre—Old Paris—Notre Dame—Napoleon's Tomb—The Théâtre Français—Representation of "Cinna"—Versailles—The Théâtre Palais-Royal—View from the Column in the Place Vendôme—The Pirate Shops—French Childhood.

When the morning broke through the shutters, I eagerly opened them to ascertain if Paris answered to my notion of it. Of course, it was as unlike as possible;—but nevertheless the truth had abundant charms. The line of houses in which we were happily domiciled—the Rue de Rivoli—fronted the garden of the Tuileries, which occupied one side to the left with its stately, if not magnificent, pile. Beyond it to the left the arch of the bridge crossing the river obliquely was just seen, all alive with carriages, and still further, the clustered piles of the old lofty houses, the lights of which had shone so airily through the gloom of the last evening. The gardens directly before me, laid out with perverse regularity in flower-beds, flaunting amidst broad gravel walks, were still gay with the bright basin of water, the rows of orange-trees, and the casts from the antique which garrisoned the plain, and were terminated by a noble terraced walk. To the right, the garden space, separated from the busy street with tall palings, was occupied by what should be trees—sickly, dusty, stunted—still looking noble in the mass, and relieved by the vivid green of the orange bushes which edged them. In the extreme distance, to the right, rose the triumphal Arch of the Champs Elysées—looking as if fashioned of straw-coloured marble—and carrying the mind into a classical

vista of thought beyond the scene. The gardens, which might with more propriety than many of our more verdant gardens in England be called *pleasure* grounds, were dotted with strollers,—happy idlers in the summer's sun, who not only gave "no thought to the morrow," but had none for to-day—vexed by no home-tending cares—no thought of breakfast, but as something to be enjoyed at some restaurateur's when hungry, and leaving dinner as a distant possibility to take care of itself. The very soldiers who guarded the gate—each in a different-coloured uniform—instead of standing stiff and stupid like our sentinels, lounged with an air of gay indifference, and added life to the picture. I did not, at first, recognise the ingredient which threw an elegance into a view so formal in its outlines; but I soon ascertained it was the quantity of flowers bordering the beds, and glistening like ribands on the eye—and which, dusty and faded as they looked when you approached them, shed a faint perfume on the hot air. The whole, viewed from the slight balcony which ran round our apartments, beneath the cope of a cloudless sky, really enchanted me;—and I could scarcely believe the twofold delight real, of at once seeing it, and knowing it to be *Paris*.

After breakfast, we sallied forth luxuriously to stroll through the bright wilderness of Paris. Turning to the right from the street in which we were domiciled, we passed into the Place Vendôme, in the centre of which stands the imperishable Column, formed of brass from the cannon taken by Napoleon;—embossed by figures indicating his exploits; and surmounted by his colossal image. It is a monument worthy of the imperial hero whom it celebrates. In form it is romantic—in substance massive—like the history of him who surmounts it—something between a gorgeous nightmare and a Midsummer Night's Dream! Crossing the square, we lounged along a fine straight street, formed by shops of glittering promise, but

not comparable to our Regent-Street temptations, and reached the Boulevards, which form the noblest street in Paris on this side of the river. Of noble breadth—the road graced, if not shaded, by occasional trees,—the causeways broad enough for half-a-dozen dandies to pass abreast, and not compel the lonely grisette to accept an arm or the kennel—and the houses, broken here and there by a theatre or exhibition, all vivid above with windows, and living below with shops—this succession of streets was to us a succession of bright wonders. The pleasure, however, was toil; for the sun was intensely bright, and found a mirrored reflection (rarely caused here by any inferior luminary) in the brilliant objects of the scene; so that we enjoyed an ice at Tortoni's (which we spied as a refreshing name in this arid wilderness), almost as much as the idea of eating it in a place we had so often dreamt of. The true business of our morning—and a very proper business for any morning—was to determine at what theatre we should spend the evening; and this choice was at once aided and perplexed by a lamp-post (which perchance had performed a less kindly office when it upheld "the light of other days"), eloquent with the variously coloured announcements of nine theatres. Among them I saw the bill of the Théâtre Porte St. Martin, informing us that a new play of Victor Hugo, called "Ruy Blas," was to be represented for the twentieth time; and I made my election at once. Wilful as the French romantic drama is, it has life in its will; and life is better than death, however classical. Resolved to secure the means of comfortably criticising this bold irregularity, I left my weaker companions to cheapen pretty things in pretty shops, and toiled on along the broad interminable pavement to the box-office of the theatre, where I secured places in the balcony directly fronting the stage; and which, I was informed, would be ours at any time in the evening when we might claim them. By an excellent arrangement, the play-bills

inform their gentle readers of the precise time at which the several performances of the evening will begin; and by one still more valuable, the principal piece is (at least occasionally) played second; so that the comfort of dinner is not necessarily sacrificed to dramatic pleasures. I have urged a similar course on great actors in vain; they always (with us) insist on the first place, contrary to processional usage, as the post of honour; and the consequence is, that your tragedy (or your friend's) begins at seven to empty boxes; the first act is interrupted by the advents of such visitors as do sacrifice their home comforts for the play; some, whose approval you regard beyond the loudest applause of the pit, enter a private box just as the fifth act commences; and others never appear at all. On this occasion we experienced the truth of the adage, "They manage these things better in France," for we "assisted" at Meurice's splendid table d'hôte at half-past five; took coffee, and walked in the decaying light of a beautiful evening through the avenues of the Palais-Royal, just spangling out with its varied lights; its dusty garden glittering with fountains in full play, and the broad line of the Boulevards all glowing with careless life—and took our places in front of the balcony of the theatre just as the curtain fell on the vaudeville which we desired to avoid. In size and form I think this theatre almost perfect; in area, a nobler English Opera House; in form, the beautiful segment of a perfect circle; in pervading colour, crimson. The house was well filled with attentive but not enthusiastic spectators; and at the close of the play it was obvious there were some among them who did not belong to the author's adorers. The play, indeed, was a daring experiment on their patience, for it lasted exactly four hours—that is, as long as Hamlet, when played by Mr. Kemble, and suggestive of "music between his pauses." It was, however, full of life, incident, and striking situation, graced by the music of rhyme—like a populous and painful picture in a gorgeous

frame. Perhaps the care of the composition, ensured by the restraint which the dramatist imposed on himself in writing it, rendered the extravagance of the conceptions at once more tolerable and more vivid ; at all events it supplied a curious contrast between the author's practice of his own art, and his levelling theories, availing himself for the investiture of his thoughts of all the external adornments of style, while he sought to strip poor humanity bare of all appliances of rank and state—aristocrat to himself—leveller to all mankind beside ! It has three heroes, all scoundrels more or less, the best of them, Ruy Blas himself, being a footman, who wins the love of a queen under false pretences, disguised as a gentleman ; fills the highest offices of state ; murders the greater villain, who tricked him out in borrowed finery and a stolen name to take a revenge like that meditated in the Lady of Lyons ; and finally dies happy on the compliance of his royal mistress with his prayer, that she would pronounce his own proper name. The author would probably describe his own purpose as being to show the power of talent and energy to overcome all the disadvantages of menial condition, and vindicate their right to command the noblest and to be beloved by the loftiest ; and so far it is most just ; but when in doing this, he pours contempt on rank, station, decorum,—all "the sweet degrees which this brief world affords"—he seems to me to defeat his own generous aim. These are the things which inspire and reward and dignify the swelling impulse of the lowly-born ; they exist for the sake of that intellectual greatness which tends upward; and if utterly destroyed, or made false and hollow by the contempt of the world, would leave young ambition to fret and waste itself in objectless misery, or vent itself in evil deeds. In order that the greatest possible violence may be offered to the sense of probability, the scene is laid at the Court of Spain—amidst the very frost-work of etiquette —which is pictured to the life, or rather the death, in Schiller's Don Carlos. Here it is that a liveried lackey is

represented as cherishing love—ardent, respectful, and not despairing—for the Queen. Here it is that he is represented as rising by merit, and with a rapidity unexampled, to the post of prime minister—when he virtuously and magnanimously employs his power in sending the patrician scoundrel whose name he has assumed to the galleys. Here it is that the youthful Queen, whom at first we see under the control of a Duenna, not daring to take a walk in the garden without attendance, running after the footman minister; visiting him at all hours; and finally gracing his last exploit and death by her presence. Surely there is no use in turning the world upside down after this fashion! Still the interest was powerful, though it was not so much the interest of sympathy with any of the persons, as the interest of curiosity excited to the utmost to know how they would be extricated from each strange situation, and what stranger situation could best ill in store. If a succession of surprises—managed with consummate theatrical skill—and keeping attention wide awake for four hours, can constitute a fine drama, this is one;—it has material for as many melodramas as acts; and, after all, is worth a hundred such petrifactions as "Cinna." The acting was quite worthy of the composition — vigorous, picturesque, and equal—but without any of those touches of relieving grace which we have seen in our high tragic representations, and which linger still among us. M. Frédéric Lemaître, who performed the first hero, was announced in great letters, and therefore was, I presume, the principal tragedian; but I did not perceive that the actors who supported him were essentially inferior — each had the energy of Kean without his passion or pathos — and the effect was in rude harmony with the author's conception. By the time the curtain fell it was nearly twelve o'clock;—and we walked home, along the Boulevards and across the Place Vendôme, in lovely starlight, surprised to find cafés deserted and their glories just expiring. The votaries of pleasure keep good hours at

Paris—at least, so far as retirement from the public eye may be so regarded—for all places of entertainment were empty and closing, and the streets quite still and almost forsaken. Whatever mischief might lurk within the roofs that glistened beneath the cloudless blue-sky, no vestige of vice, or excess, or misery obscured the scene. The statue of Napoleon seemed among the stars—as far uplifted beyond the silent city, as his fame above the vanities of those among whom he raised it.

The next was another glorious summer-day, and well enjoyed. We did not mis-spend the wealth—beyond that of Ormus and of Ind—which the liberal sun vouchsafed us. First we sought the Louvre—which, indeed, we found the day before, only just as it was shutting at four o'clock—and now approached with misgivings, lest the want of our passport, which, with Lord Palmerston's magic autograph, had been sent to be viséd, and had not returned from the ceremony, should prevent us from obtaining the benefit accorded to foreigners by French politeness. After a little parley, however, we gained admittance, and mounted the grave leaden-looking staircase which leads to the great gallery. We hurried through the first square room, one side of which is almost filled by the vast picture of The Marriage at Cana—that divine miracle, before which Teetotalism should stand aghast, as unchristian as it is unkindly—to embrace, by turning to the right, the entire extent of this Palace of Art, a quarter of a mile in length, all hung with pictures of high pretension—more than half of them at least of great merit, and some of immorta fame. It is, however, impossible—at least it was to me—to look along the narrow-arched gallery, diminishing in the remote perspective, and to conceive of the walls as thus laden with the spoils of time; to blend in thought the details, worthy of life-long examination, with the outline of the whole. And this stunning sense of massed magnificence disturbs the pleasure of contemplating any one

picture: you cannot forget for a moment that "all are but parts of one stupendous whole;" and the phantom of the Louvre dazzles and distracts the mind, which would "rest and expatiate" on one of its wonders. After you have passed through acres of canvas, blushing with the glories of modern French art—of which it would be ungrateful to speak, and which it is better not to examine—you enter the enchanted home of Claude's and Poussin's, intermingled in their pomp—then are surfeited with the luxuriance of Rubens—and then approach the inner shrine of art, where Raphael, Correggio, and Titian keep their state. I can pretend to no distinct recollection of the grandeurs and beauties assembled and clustered there, except that Titian's portraits in their tremendous reality made Vandyke's look like mere *paintings*, and actually induced me to turn away from works which, at Warwick Castle, I should have felt to be divine. All besides is confused as the saffron tints on a stormy western sky at sunset. After three hours' gorgeous dreaming among the pictures, we descended to the statues; but we had no eyes for them; for we had gazed ours blind above-stairs, and "could not quite forget ourselves to stone." I was not sorry when we emerged into the fresh air and "light of common day," as from an enchanted castle. After all, I regarded the Louvre with more interest as a great chapter in Hazlitt's intellectual history, than as the richest gallery of pictures in the world. The intensity of his first admiration—the association of the scene with the triumphs of his favourite hero; and the softened spirit in which he revisited it, when spoiled of its noblest trophies, and when that hero had been finally vanquished by what he regarded as the commonplace virtues and tyrannies of the world—gave to the place, in my mind, a personal interest, nearer, if lower, than its matchless treasures could inspire. Hazlitt's true history was within—of the struggles and the winnings of thought; and as thought will sympathize with thought itself, more perfectly than

with thought's grandest objects, so here the tenderest associations this mighty collection rendered back were those which a mind, now snatched from human view, once imparted to its glories and its losses.

From the Louvre, after pausing to renew an acquaintance we made yesterday with a gigantic white rabbit, beautiful in glossy softness, at a little corner shop of the Place du Carrousel, we crossed the Pont Neuf, and plunged into the alley-like streets of old Paris, in search of Notre Dame. The view of the city on each side from the centre of one of the bridges, is that which conveys the deepest impression of the capital, both in its modern gaieties and its historic glories. The long line of the Louvre stretching to the right, with the Tuileries beyond, continuing it—the clustering trees of the Gardens, prolonging the line—with the barrier Arch of Neuilly lifted high in air, contrast strangely yet nobly with the massed, irregular, lofty houses of the old city on the left, over which the grey towers of Notre Dame struggle into the bright sky. The river itself is a glorious division of the city, not equal here to the Thames in breadth, but for that reason better adapted to its place as a lucid avenue amidst the capital; and being unaffected by the tide, is without the alloy of long shelving banks of mud which line the London river except at high-water. Paris is not a port, and therefore lacks the world of masts, indicating enormous wealth, and carrying the mind to a thousand remote shores, which tower into the murky sky below London Bridge; but on the other hand, it is not blackened by coal-barges, nor its sides at once enriched and polluted by wharfs and warehouses. The Parisians have no taste for aquatic pleasures; no "trim-built wherries" ply on the Seine; no "jolly young watermen" claim distant kindred with the romance which hovers about a sailor's life; but huge baths invite them to bathe in water which is tolerable, as that of a river more glorious to them than the rivers of Damascus to the Syrian; and the still

deep water offers a silent refuge from intolerable sorrows in a fate over which no coroner lectures, nor little tradesmen, in pothouse assembled, as "gentlemen of the jury," moralize! Leaving the bridge, and plunging, not into the river, but into the depths of streets beyond it, we realised, for the first time, the descriptions we had read of the Parisian streets, as narrow alleys with the gutter in the middle, to which the road, paved with large stones, slopes on each side; sometimes half blocked up with cabbage stalks and other vegetable remains: and when a huge diligence, drawn by three horses abreast, thunders along them, seeming as if they left no refuge, and telling you of a miraculous escape when the peril has passed. Through such avenues we threaded our way, half blinded and quite stunned, to the front of the venerable cathedral; an open space, indeed, but more resembling a filthy inn-yard than the approach to one of the most famous churches in Christendom, where every kind of filth was allowed to accumulate, and rubbish might be cast, not in secret, but under the great eye of heaven. Not a trace of reverential care gave token of Christian piety or antiquarian sentiment; but the poor old majestic pile, neighboured by dirty cafés and bankrupt-looking shops, seemed left meekly to vindicate its claim of respect before Heaven, like Christianity in its earliest days, rising above the scorns and the abuses of the world. I was disappointed in the size of the edifice, having received a shadowy notion of an enormous building from Victor Hugo's great romance, of which it is the scene; but abundantly recompensed by the sense of dim antiquity which it conveys, with more hoary power than any pile which I recollect, not in ruins. Its square gray turrets are the haunts of innumerable birds, former generations of whom have shivered away the crumbling stones for their posterity to "make their bed and procreant cradle in;" and the low archways over the humble portals beneath them, seem carved out of wood which has been charred by the action of fire.

The interior is naked and gloomy, and struck us with a vault-like chillness. How different from the pride of Paris —the Madeleine, which we visited the next day, elevated on broad platforms of steps, a huge Grecian building of white stone, like an Athenian temple without, like a gaudy music-room within! The interior is still unfinished; but all glowing with purple-and-gold, without shadow, without repose, shows that in its perfection it will be a miracle of French art, raised to French glory. For such a gewgaw as this do the Parisians neglect their own holy cathedral; but no wonder! Self is ever rebuked before the embodied presence of ages! Notre Dame is the grave of vanity, the Madeleine will be its throne.

Emerging from the sepulchral aisles of the cathedral into the fœtid heat of its square, we were glad to find a hackney-coach answering to our call. It might have been English, as capacious, as crazy, and as damp as those which linger among us; and its driver was as jolly, broad-shouldered, copper-faced, and clumsy a coachman as John Bull (according to his humour) would boast of or blush for. He drove us to the Hospital of the Invalids, where, after rejecting many hospitable invitations to visit the kitchen, in which the dinner of the veterans is cooked, we found the church in which the remains of Napoleon sojourn—I cannot say *repose*. Through gilded gratings we peeped into the violet-canopied recess, in which the sarcophagus *said* to contain them is enthroned, as if in an imperial cabinet decked for living pride. The golden wreaths which enclose the names of Napoleon's great battle-fields; the tattered flags which wave over the green marble coffin; the dainty carpets spread out as for courtiers' feet, all conspire to produce a mockery of life which makes the cold truth more freezing. "Above it the bees in play flutter and cluster" in vain, for matchless industry is torpid here. This, even if it *is* what it seems, is a sorry pavilion for dead bones which were enshrined in the rock of St. Helena; but we are credibly

informed that the mighty ashes are not there, but enclosed in a vault beneath the central dome of the church, until they shall find a resting-place in their final sepulchre. The tomb is in progress—slow progress as that with which a republican in power desires to accomplish the purposes of his days of enthusiastic promise—in the place of the altar, which, dividing the twofold churches, was destined for another sanctity. Why this disturbance of the mighty dead in his majestic tomb ?- Why this real or pretended sojourn amidst the fluttering draperies of fame? Why this trophied mockery of mortal being? Is it all done for an idle show? No! It is the use which a dexterous man makes of all he possesses of a great man. Rarely are the uses of fame so tangible. The spirit here does for a kingdom what Shakspeare makes the body of a great man do for a cask—

> "Imperious Cæsar dead and turned to clay
> May stop a hole to keep the wind away;
> Oh, that the dust which kept the world in awe
> Should patch a hole to expel the winter's flaw!"

The wise politician, happily for the peace of Europe Monarch of the French, thus prolongs the influence of his wonderful predecessor, and stops the huge revolution's flaw —to say nothing of the flaw in his own title—by the prolonged observances to the cold remains of one whom the nation identifies with its glory; whose mere dates fill its imagination; and whose history is more romance than it can bear. Long may he be able thus to employ the very shadow of Napoleon's shade! Long out of the ashes of an imperial warrior may he extract the conservation of freedom and peace! Does not this use of a name show how indestructible and how plastic intellectual greatness is; how potent its shadows are to protect the substances of empire, and how the pale reflection of its victories may still the world into peace!

We reached Meurice's at the happy hour of dinner, and

availed ourselves of all its delights, and then sought the places I had secured in the morning in the boxes of the Théâtre Français—in the same central position which we had occupied in the smaller theatre of the Porte St. Martin. The play was "Cinna," esteemed, I am assured, a masterpiece of Corneille; which, cold, passionless, lifeless, seemed to me to bear the same relation to the romantic drama of last night, which a painted statue would have to an "extravagant and erring" form of flesh and blood. Surely nothing but an uneasy sense of levity, and a consequent desire for an opposite extreme in art, can account for a great people's admiration of such a piece as this. The incident on which it is founded—the noble clemency of Augustus to a young patrician whom he had detected in a conspiracy against his life, and whom he subdued to confession and tears by a confidential recital of his ingratitude as that of another—is an affecting historical anecdote, and is exquisitely treated by Barry Cornwall in one of those little Dramatic Scenes which are quintessences of pathetic beauty. But surely to preface this scene by four acts of intrigue—by the progress of a conspiracy chequered with the machinations of an odious woman, and the quarrels of her two lovers, Maxime and Cinna—without dignity, interest, or common sense, is a strange building up of a great tragedy. The gross absurdity of representing the entire action—love, treachery, detection, imperial judgment, and mercy, all taking place in one hall, far more absurdly than the dialogues in the original Cato, when Dennis ridiculed it, and Kemble had not breathed into it the breath of life—is enhanced by the perverse French practice (in the classical drama) of not even dropping the curtain on the scene at the end of each act; so that the only relief to the eternal sameness was produced by the manœuvring of three arm-chairs, which the servants of the theatre *did* move about, and which, indeed, seemed to me to constitute the action of the play. The picture of the scene, indeed disclosing lines of tall

dingy columns reaching to an arched roof, beneath which the actors in Roman costume, moving like dwarfs, gave a sense of enormous height to the antique hall—seen in the dull light of the theatre, had a grandeur in it which sometimes arrested the feeling of weariness by reminding me of Poussin's old halls coloured by learned lore ; but regarded as a thing of human interest, the performance was nought. The lady who played Emilie seemed to me more in earnest than Rachel, in this poor part, and her performance, on the whole, more striking ; though wanting some trickeries of art, as the petty bit of scorn with which Rachel, turning to her waiting-woman, dismisses her second lover Maxime, perhaps in just scorn of her own character ; and the part of Cinna was played as well as it deserved. After the tragedy, a *petite* comedy, charming in itself, was charmingly acted ; though I am not aware that it was graced by any performers known to fame ; and sent us, after a long and busy day, in excellent humour to our beds.

The next morning we rose early, in order to fulfil an engagement, agreed to in London, for spending part of the day at Versailles with some near and beloved relatives who are settled in that famous place. The day, like those which preceded it, was cloudless, and, as it advanced, became intensely hot. Rival railroads, one on the left and the other on the right side of the Seine, connect Paris with Versailles ; and the rival offices, opposite to each other at the entrance of the Place du Carrousel, glow in large placards, with omnibusses to match ; but the French cads are not so ferocious in their addresses as ours. In ignorance of the advantage of either, we chose the left ; and were conveyed in a very nice new omnibus, which, in its cleanliness, bespoke the severity of the opposition, to the Station, beyond the Hospital of Invalids. Having secured our tickets, we were soon in rapid motion, and my son and I having been allowed to mount the roof of one of the carriages, enjoyed a splendid view of the environs of Paris.

The prevalent objects are white buildings, interspersed with trees—a scene more park-like and elegant than the neighbourhood of London—but not moulded into hill or valley, as if Nature were smilingly wreathed into dimples, as the country to the south, north, or west of London is—not so freshly green, nor so sprinkled with church-spires, but tamely classical. About ten o'clock we reached Versailles, not a neat village as I expected, but a busy town, full of dingy coffee-shops, not very unlike our Brentford. We found our way, after repeated inquiries, into a broad, white road, lined on each side with double rows of trees, stretching up a gently rising ground. The trees were too far apart to yield any substantial shade, and the long yet scanty grass which grew in patches beneath them, served rather to make the white dust more conspicuous and arid than to relieve the eye. Dead walls on each extreme side of the road screened the villas which lurked, each in its own garden, from observation; for the Frenchman's vanity does not, like ours, expose his house to the admiration of the passenger; he is so vain of his person, and accomplishments, and nation, that he has no vanity to spare for his place of abode. At last, hot, dirty, and wearied, we reached our destination, and rejoiced in the delicious contrast afforded to our feverish walk by the trim secluded garden, the fountain playing on a miniature lawn, the excellent breakfast, and the cordial welcome which awaited us. After breakfast, our host Mr. S. and I strolled up the hill, and threading the pretty pathway of a little upland coppice, emerged on a green bank, like a platform, on which an old windmill stood. The prospect of a richly wooded plain, with low hills in the distance, wore that home-like aspect which makes the commonplaces of nature so welcome, and I felt how consoling such a gentle English-like view must be to sojourners in a strange land. Passing through some gaps in natural hedges, which English school-boys might have made, we came in sight of the turrets and chimneys of the famous

Palace, and overlooked the groves which have shrouded so much pleasure, vanity, sorrow, and despair. Except the huge extent of building traced among the tall trees, there was nothing very striking in the scene; but what ghost-like recollections and fancies did it awaken! How slender compared to this the voluptuous interest recognised by Pope in

> "Clifeden's proud alcove,
> "The bower of wanton Shrewsbury and love!"

The form of Marie-Antoinette haunts these groves and makes them sacred—I say "*the form*," because it is her beauty, real or imputed, which weaves the spell, and moulds her misfortunes into images of grace. How shallow and false is the notion that personal beauty is a frail and fleeting thing! It triumphs over wisdom and virtue, not only in life, but in death; redeems or veils folly and crime; and sweetens the saddest passages of history!

We returned to Paris by the train which glides along the right-hand side of the river, through woods and gardens, and beside the palace of St. Cloud—a far more beautiful course than that of the morning—but imbedded in the valley, and, therefore, not commanding so extensive a prospect. We visited the Madeleine, and afterwards a sort of miniature chapel of the same kind, all flaunting with white, gold, and purple, with more of a theatrical than religious air; but perhaps religious enough for the minds of the Parisian idlers who may "look in" there. At half-past five we dined at Meurice's for the last time; but our breakfast had been too late and too good to allow us to enjoy the good things of the table d'hôte as they deserved. There was a difference of opinion in our party on the merits of Meurice's cookery; but none on the promptitude, dexterity, and grace of the attendance, which were quite without parallel in our experience. Indeed the *garçons* of the Continent are a far more agreeable class than our English waiters. Our waiters, with some pleasant excep-

tions, are a surly, ill-looking, ill-conditioned race—moving about with airs of injured innocence while you stay—and scowling at you when you depart, unless you pay them twice as much as the profit which their master obtains on your bill. The *garçons* are generally lively, light-hearted fellows, on excellent terms with themselves, and disposed to be pleased with every one else ;—vain of their trim jackets, open collars, and well-brushed hair, as a country actor is of his fine dress, and disposed like him to make the scene on which they move as gay and pleasant as possible. They seem conscious that you are in search of enjoyment, and sympathise with you in your holiday. Some of them who speak broken English, and obtain higher wages for the accomplishment, supply the deficiency of the English unlearned in French and German with a ready good-humour and delicacy of tact, which really makes one feel personally grateful to them. The lad who performed this kind office for us at Strasbourg last year, spoke his imperfect English with so pleasing a voice, and seemed so happy to prevent our embarrassment, and anticipate our wishes, that we could not help thanking him as well as paying him, and felt sorry, when we passed by the tall spire of the city this year without stopping to encounter the various annoyances of this goose-fattening place, that we should miss seeing him again.

After dinner (the rest of our party preferring a little repose in our apartments), I visited the Théâtre of the Palais-Royal—a small, neat, compact house—with the painful peculiarity of a pit without seats. It is hard enough to stand during the whole of some great performance in the "standing room" of one of our pits, but to go to the theatre with the certainty of enduring the perpendicular position all night, to see three or four vaudevilles, requires a theatrical energy, of which even I have no conception. I saw a vaudeville entitled *La Sœur de Jocrisse*, which seemed to be pleasantly written, and was certainly acted well ; but

not worth standing to see. It represented the detection of the exuberant jollity of a set of gay revellers by the sister of one of them dressed in male attire, and mimicking their manners, and the scrapes into which she brings herself in the accomplishment of her scheme. The best part of the representation was the admirable skill with which the gradations of tipsiness were marked, especially by the principal actor—nothing excessive, nothing disgusting, but with a vividness which I have never seen any of our Cassios equal; and which is the more surprising as the French have fewer originals to copy from. The worst part was the disguise of the lady—who when she "came out" at last in her white muslin frock, proved to be a pretty delicate girl, but looked like a most despicable little puppy in her frock-coat and trousers. Without quarrelling with the doublet and hose of the Rosalinds and Violas of the stage, I think the sickly practice of exposing ladies in the everyday costume of men equally degrades both sexes; the female is lost in the disguise, and the male sex is as grossly misrepresented; for a delicate girl makes a most insignificant stripling. I did not wait to see either of the remaining pieces, but rejoined my companions, and with them partook of ices and lemonade on a rude table in the garden of the Palais-Royal, to my amusement and my son's unspeakable delight. The night was delicious; the fountains sparkled among the dry and dusty trees, and the lamps gave the scene a likeness to Vauxhall—only ruder, merrier, and more sober. The company around were not very select, but very polite, and very happy; and, although consisting of the lower order of citizens, male and female, did not alarm us by the slightest tendency to intoxication, or to any breach of decorum. We remained till half-past eleven, when the lights in the most radiant cafés began to disappear, and went cheerfully to our beds.

Saturday was the last day of our brief sojourn at Paris, and, short as my acquaintance with that famous city was,

I felt no slight regret at leaving it. Paris, with all its superficial vivacity, may be, and I dare say is, a very wearisome place to live in ; but for one who desires a few days of cloudless, careless, innocent gaiety, it is the best place in the world ; because with the objects of curiosity which London may rival, it has an atmosphere of carelessness and joy, which makes you feel, not that you are making holiday in the midst of sad laborious creatures, but enjoying yourself among some happy tribe who make holiday all the year round. Lord Byron, speaking of wilder and grosser enjoyments, says—for one of the half-truths with which Don Juan abounds—

"There is no sterner moralist than pleasure."

If it is true that the pleasure he refers to—the pleasure *he* was too well able to appreciate—tends to sad thoughts, it is no less true that light-hearted innocent pleasure tends to sweet and wise ones ; and that the languor which it leaves may be peopled with tender thoughts. So Parisian enjoyments—all innocent and graceful—made me thoughtful, if not wise ; and I left the place without any sense of its alleged frivolity. The morning favoured this cast of sentiment—it was clouded and moist ; a welcome change after the fierce luxury of the week, though not promising so well for our journey, through days and nights, to Geneva. After an early breakfast, my son and I ascended the column of the Place Vendôme, followed by two French soldiers of the line, who, with us, waited some minutes before the old cocked-hatted Janus appeared with the key, and accepted our half-francs like the Monumental sixpences. The day, being clouded, though agreeable to the personal sensations of the occupants of the gallery, was not favourable to the view of Paris—which should bask in a flood of sunshine—and perhaps scarcely allows me to regard myself as a competent judge of the view of Paris—subjectively, as the Germans would say—looked down upon, as common people would

say—compared with that of London, from the Monument or the iron gallery of St. Paul's cathedral;—else I should say that London, so regarded, infinitely surpasses Paris, not merely in extent, but in interest and picturesque effect. Thus surveyed, Paris loses the impression which its piled, huddled, crowded, buildings produce on the visitor to the old city, and the sense of magnificence conveyed by the long piles of the Louvre and the Tuileries, and looks like a mass of square-built houses in the midst of a flat country, without the irregular grace of those frequent spires "whose silent fingers point to heaven," and which are more suggestive to my mind of the thoughts which connect the busy yet trifling pursuits and low cares of us poor humans with our immortal destiny, when thus starting up from Thames Street and the Strand into the clear blue sky, than when they seem to grow out of the tufted trees of country villages. The Seine, from this point at least, is invisible—buried in the tall houses; while the Thames, to the westward lessening in solemn gloom, and expanding to the eastward with its thousand masts, forms a most striking object in the London picture. Our military companions gazed upwards with intense admiration on the statue of the Emperor, just beneath which we stood, and took little heed of the city below. As far as I could learn from them, *this* was the object of their ascent; and I was glad to hear it, for it is rarely a Frenchman takes trouble to look *upward!* They were moreover very courteous; anxious to point out to us all the noticeable points of view; and I could not help thinking how different would be the usage which a poor Frenchman, knowing as little of English as I do of French, would receive from one of our life-guardsmen, if he presumed to ask him about the palace at St. James's, without offering him a pot of beer. The French soldiers whom I have seen at Paris are clowns in point of carriage, and dwarfs in point of stature, to the soldiers of our most showy regiments; but they are far better disciplined in humanity—

they are not martial machines, but sensible men. I am afraid, however, they rather cherish the memory of Napoleon as a concentration of their own glories, and the symbol of their own pride, than as endeared by those amiable traits which to an indifferent person commend it, as that of the most humane of conquerors. The rest of the morning was spent by my companions in a most virtuous search after old churches ; by me in a stroll, first through the Palais-Royal, and afterwards in the garden of the Tuileries. While in the first, I was attracted by the shops which are laden with the works of English authors, pirated by Galignani—that pirate of European fame—not for the use of French, but of English readers. There was almost every popular work, from Shakspeare's Plays down to the last Guide Book, at infamously low prices and on infamously bad paper, to the degradation and the shame of literature. These editions, so far as I could ascertain, were only typographically inaccurate, not deliberately mutilated for the foreign market. But if neither the law nor the comity of nations will concede to the author a control over the reprint of his works in a foreign country, it is obvious that they may be subjected, without his consent, to the most injurious changes. Indeed one reason given by the American opponents of international copyright is, that it would prevent them from adapting the works of British authors to the American taste !

From this repository of wholesale and retail theft I turned into the garden of the Tuileries for the last time. A few drops of rain fell, but only enough to accord with a soft melancholy, and I took a charming stroll through these " trim gardens," over which the fading flowers, refreshed by the moisture, shed a faint, sickly, delicious perfume. I observed some French children—the very small ones, fantastically dressed up as playthings, seemed petted, caressed, and spoiled ; but the elder ones, from ten to sixteen, looking care-worn, conceited, independent, and miserable.

Everything is gay in Paris but childhood. Old age is gay—pleasantly so even when fastastically so—and death itself is tricked out in garlands, and "turned to favour and to prettiness." Why then are the children so joyless? It cannot be that they are too harshly restrained, or ruled by fear; for a cruel discipline is no part of the French character, or the French educational practice; on the contrary, a French boy soon becomes his own master, and studies or lounges as he pleases. Is it not that there are no firesides—no *homes?* It seems a fine independent thing for a Parisian shopkeeper to dispense with the plague of domestic servants—take every day, with his wife, the freedom of the restaurant and the café—and when he shuts up his shop, leave it to take care of itself, while he lounges or dances, or smokes, or reads a journal, or does all these in some public garden—or, better than all, goes to the play. But the pleasures and comforts of children are of home growth, and require a home shelter. They are here only sad, wearied, wondering spectators of the gaieties of their parents, which are all associated with coquetry, gallantry, and feelings akin to these; in which they do not participate; and though some amends is made by an early initiation into their essences and an earlier emulation of their symbols, still children, as children, have no food for their affections in the whirling kaleidoscope which dazzles them. In Prussia, children are happier, because they are under a stricter discipline; but England, with all its imputed sins of fagging and flogging, and excess of Latin versification, is the place where childhood is most happy as childhood; happy in restraint; happy in indulgence; happy in the habits of obedience, and respect, and filial love! You would not find such a set of care-worn, pale, unhappy faces in any charity-school in England, as you may mark in a throng of wandering, dissipated boys in the gardens of the Tuileries.

CHAPTER III.

JOURNEY FROM PARIS TO GENEVA.

Departure from Paris—Journey by Diligence to Dijon—Delay at Dijon—The Jura—Geneva.

WE took our farewell dinner in our apartments at three o'clock—which, frugally ordered, was munificently provided as a parting compliment by our host—and which, accompanied by a little light wine, enabled us to bear our departure from Paris. At four o'clock we took our way to the great coach-office in the Rue Notre-Dame-des-Victoires, from which we were to start; but, as when we arrived, and had stowed our moderate baggage, we found there were yet some minutes left to us, my son and I, having handed the ladies into their seats in the *coupé* of the diligence, sought and found a last Parisian cup of coffee in a magnificent café in the neighbouring square;—and which, with a glass of pale, soft brandy, shared between us in proper proportion, completed the serene feeling most luxurious on commencing a long journey. We snatched "a fearful joy," being half afraid we might be too late;—but all was right;—the huge lumbering horses were just brought out to be harnessed to the huge diligence when we returned; my son joined the ladies in the *coupé;* and I mounted the arduous height of the *banquette,* where the *première place* was secured for me. I took my place in the furthest corner of the large deep calash, which was pointed out as mine; the *conducteur* placed himself beside me in the centre; and a young soldier who escorted a party of sisters or cousins to Dijon, who occupied one division of the diligence, took the other corner—quite a youth, and I suppose a common soldier, but perfectly well-bred, and amiably attentive to his

female charge. Precisely as the clock struck five, our already-mounted coachman, rude compared with the departing race of English stage-coachmen, who shed a half-genteel grace on the last days of English stagemanship, cracked his enormous whip, and urged his six horses, three abreast, into the narrow street, the entire road-way of which they filled. At a rapid pace, under his fearless conduct, we rattled across the bridge—dashed into the narrow streets where we had been confounded by similar visitations, when in search of Notre-Dame on Wednesday—and took our revenge in turn on the swarming population who fled at our approach. Soon we were beyond Paris—on a dusty road beside the Seine—along which we travelled for some miles—still a noble river, broader than the Thames at Chelsea, and, not like it, half-muddy banks half its time—but a genuine stream from edge to edge of fresh and living water. When we lost it, our course lay through country as flat and uninteresting as travellers usually describe the interior of France to be;—but whose censure, I think, unjust as to such part of the remaining journey as we passed in sufficient light to form an opinion of the scenery. Evening, however, soon deepened into night; we hurried on through the level country, streaked occasionally by glistening streams—"now in glimmer and now in gloom"—till daybreak showed us a long ascent of hill, the first rising ground we had looked on since we quitted Paris. We dismounted to relieve our horses; and then found another diligence behind toiling up the steep, and looking like a huge tortoise. Rain had fallen plentifully in the night; and we found our road saturated with wet, and the morning damp, chilly, and as ungenial as if it were English. The long hill, skirted by thin brushwood, brought to my mind the southern ascent of Shooter's Hill; so that the drizzle, damp, and aspect of the road, made us feel almost at home. The top of the hill afforded us no prospect, except of a flat upland, like that which greets

you on the table-land of the Cotswolds, where the road, seen for miles before you, is the most interesting object in view. We descended into a little valley to a village beside a stream, where we found breakfast, coarse, but most welcome to those who had eaten nothing since three o'clock on the preceding day; and which, with a bottle of very pleasant white *vin ordinaire*, greatly refreshed us. After this, we made no halt till we reached Semur at about four o'clock in the afternoon, where we found a comfortable dinner prepared in a rude room on a deal table, and were allowed plenty of time to enjoy it. This town seemed to occupy a pretty site, almost romantic, by the side of a stream deeply embedded in sandstone banks, reminding me of the least picturesque parts of the Esk at Lasswade. What I chiefly recollect, however, of our rest at Semur, was the most delicious melon I ever tasted; in colour a deep saffron; and in flavour rich, sweet, juicy far beyond my previous experience—a flavour not to be renewed or forgotten.

Evening soon closed in, and with it came the uneasy sleep, which, often broken, makes minutes seem hours, yet which shed its dreaminess over everything until, at three on Monday morning, we rattled over the sharp stones of Dijon, and I found our coachman cracking his long whip, in triumphant defiance of the repose of the good burgesses, and urging his unwieldy vehicle round sharp turnings and through narrow streets with reckless dexterity. Amid the tall ghost-like houses of a small square, the moonlight fell upon the black buttresses and slender turrets of a great Gothic church, the Notre-Dame of Dijon, which I then supposed to be the cathedral, and which, in the strange light in which it stood, looked to me colossal, mightier far than it appeared "in the light of common day," though even then it was bold, massive, and beautiful. On stepping into the court of the Bureau of the Diligences, we were perplexed and annoyed by being informed that we could proceed no further in that vehicle, but must wait for the *malle-poste*, which

would not start for Geneva till the afternoon of the day, which then was very young. We dimly learned that our places had been taken in the wrong diligence; our heavy companion of the road was bound direct for the Calvinistic capital, while ours stopped here, or turned off in another direction. As we had "séttled and bound up each corporal agent to the terrible feat" of proceeding by one diligence all through from Paris to Geneva, we were sadly disconcerted by this mistake; and stood in the cold and dark street, grumbling and shivering, and hesitating whether we should accept the offer of an asylum in a little hostelry, which exhibited the tantalising title of The Hotel of Geneva, and in whose small *salon* a large tallow candle was running to seed. At last we persuaded ourselves to be comforted; and, entering the *salon*, where our little soldier companion and his female *protégées* were already obtaining refreshment, were welcomed by a right jolly host, a refined Boniface, with a paternal kindness, and conducted by him to an upper chamber, where, declining beds, and postponing breakfast till eight, we bivouacked till daybreak. At six, I sallied forth into the cool fresh morning air, and found the day cloudless and promising to be delightful. Turning to the left, I ascended a narrow street, paved with flint stones, lined on each side with decent shops, not unlike some of the streets of Shrewsbury, to a stone arch, beneath which the gate of the city stood open, and emerged thence on the open country. Before me there was nothing but the straight, white-dusted road, stretching its weary length a mile onward; to the right, stubble fields sloping gently upward; but on the left was a large grove of old trees, chiefly horse-chestnut, shading scanty grass, and skirting the battlemented wall of the city. It was obviously a place of public resort; for benches, placed beneath the largest trees, betokened the intent of the wise burgesses to provide healthful recreation for the citizens; and the absence of ignoble names cut over them did not

here, as it would with us, negative the public user. At the turn of the city wall the grove ceased, and an abrupt green declivity bounded the walk, and showed beyond it good average arable country, such as you might pass without notice in Nottinghamshire, but which here was pleasant, because home-looking, to English eyes. I returned to the little hotel, prepared fully to enjoy a plentiful breakfast of cutlets, eggs, coffee, and light Burgundy. Having ordered our dinner at half-past three, we quitted this most hospitable roof, and spent all the prime of a glorious summer day in exploring the ramparts, churches, markets, and streets of Dijon. We found that this city, once the capital of Burgundy, of oval shape, bristled on the side of a gentle hill, descending to a little river, and was surrounded on all sides by ramparts, along which a walk, shaded by trees, continuously ran; a pleasant shade, and thus encircling the town, accessible in a few minutes from every part, and forming a pretty object when seen at the end of any of its narrow streets. We found three fine churches still in perfect repair; and, besides these, the skeletons of sacred buildings almost as noble, which, I will hope, dismantled by violence at the Revolution, and not perishing by mere heartless neglect, were now debased to secular and ignoble uses. These fine old buildings, churches, no doubt, were occupied—one as a great coach-house for worn-out diligences; one as a stable; and one as a market for poultry and fruit; the first, battered, dirty, and dilapidated, terminating in a series of arches springing from the ground, and *arbouring* above, which reminded us of the glorious church of St. Ouen, at Rouen, and all still sustaining holy vestiges of imagery once consecrated, now left to crumble unheeded, without one aged devotee to deplore the sacrilege! We ascertained, by peeping through ponderous folding-doors in dead walls in the streets, that many fine old houses in Dijon had gardens and terraced walks; but the gayer part of the city, where a low crescent of yellow shops and baths fronts a large

public building filled with public offices, is not commensurate in interest with the walls and ruins. At all events, it contained nothing sufficiently interesting to make us regret the hour of dinner, punctual to which we returned to our inn, and found that our kind host, thinking our chamber up stairs too close, and the lower *salon*, which fronted the street, too open, had ordered our repast in his parlour behind the *salon*, where we partook of it to our entire satisfaction. In addition to a bottle of excellent *vin ordinaire*, which was served as of course, I ordered a bottle of Chambertin, in honour of the capital of old Burgundy, and found it delicious. Our Burgundian Boniface had no occasion, like the jolly hero of the Beaux' Stratagem, to require us "to fancy it Burgundy," it *was* so, and yet cost little more than the ale which was so translated. A cup of coffee and a little brandy closed my acquaintance with him and his good city, an acquaintance very unwillingly made, but very pleasant while it lasted—I cannot say unwillingly severed, because Geneva and the Alps were before us.

At five in the afternoon of Monday, after a cordial parting with our host, we took our places in the *malle-poste*, not nearly so spacious as the diligence, nor (which the more surprised me) half so well horsed or appointed. The ladies and my son occupied a narrower *coupé*; I squeezed myself into a narrow corner of a *banquette;* a fatter *Conducteur* "flopped down" by my side; and next to him came a coarse stout friend of his own, instead of our slim "soldier laddie." All went on well enough, however, till night-fall, when the rain descended in torrents; a terrible storm of lightning came on, and the despotic *Conducteur*, fair, ruddy, good-natured, and selfish (as very good-natured people always are), insisted on fastening down the head of the calash, so that we lay backwards, dry, warm, and almost stifled. At last we reached Dôle, in the midst of the most tremendous rain I recollected to have witnessed; and learning that here we were to wait an hour for the junction of

some branch *poste*, I struggled out of my black-hole of a prison, and exchanged it for the freedom of pacing the kitchen (or, it may be, *salon*) of the inn at which we halted. It was a strange and vast place, lofty almost as one of the stables which had been a church at Dijon in better days, with a cold stone floor; dirty deal tables occupying its length in the middle; a huge grate, large enough to roast an ox, redeemed only from icy chillness by dying embers not holding fire enough to warm a black-beetle; two dirty drabs of serving-maids, and two great tallow candles! After many attempts to make my wishes known, at length, by the application of that universal language, which, whether it is syllabled in shillings, or francs, or guilders, is rarely quite misconstrued, I succeeded in obtaining a bottle of sour (no, let me say sharp!) white wine and some water, with which mingled I refreshed my companions and myself, and assuaged the heat which we laid on the carriage and the heavens, but of which the dinner and the Chambertin were not wholly guiltless. At last, we set forward again, and, the rain having abated, I procured a little more air; and thought of Mont Blanc; and was happy.

At break of day, as we halted to change horses, I saw we were approaching the great frame in which France is set—here consisting of the range of the Jura mountains, and traversed by the great road made by him who was *in* France, and above France, but *not of* France. How unlike was the scene to all we had beheld since we left Paris, and which we had tried to think—and sometimes thought—pretty! A long line of mountain lay before us—curving round the plain not unlike the Cotswold range round the vale of Evesham—but three or four times as lofty. We were about to ascend this ridge by a hollow more bold, more simple, more vast, than any I had before seen—just as if it had been scooped out (as a child's apple) with a gigantic scoop from top to bottom, and then the hollow filled with trees. Although there was nothing Alpine in the scene—

no separate feature not familiar to the recollection of Scotland and Wales, nor so beautiful as the features of these often are—still the simplicity and vastness of the upland valley, and the road itself ascending with it, made me feel at once in another world—substantially, though not nominally, in Switzerland. Without waking my companions, who slept both wisely and too well, I extricated myself from my corner, and stood up (not upright) leaning out of my prison ;—and in spite of the drizzling rain which still fell, and the raw dampness of the morning, embraced and enjoyed the ascent with a thrilling pleasure. I fancied that when the visible summit (on which a little inn was perched) had been achieved, I should catch a glimpse of those snowy summits which had so often peered on me in my day dreams ; —but no ;—we had in truth only mastered the first outwork of the great barrier between the flat and the sublime ;—and for miles we travelled through a region almost as flat as the lower plain, though more wooded, and sometimes studded with dark rocks. A long descent brought us into the heart of the Jura—a region of grandeur and beauty—not unlike what one of the most beautiful of the Welsh valleys would be if you could take its undulating surface like a curtain and spread it over a region far uplifted and bounded by rocky hills. After breakfast (which, strange to confess, I do not particularly remember) we began another and longer ascent leading to the highest point of the Jura road, and readily complied with the wish of the *Conducteur* that we should walk up the mountain, although the dripping of rain from the tail of the receding storms of the night, and the "soft" (in Highlander's phrase) condition of the road, made the walk not quite so delightful as it would have been in fairer weather. At the summit we resumed our places—the horses were changed—and we approached the verge of the mountain whence we were to behold the glories of the long-promised land—Lake Leman—Geneva—the Alps—and above all, Mont Blanc. My heart beat quicker as the

opening of the country bespoke our approach to this European Pisgah—we reached it—the giddy descent was beneath me —the Lake of Geneva before me—Geneva just visible like a dark village—but no Alps! The weather on this point of the Jura—I should think four thousand feet above the lake—was damp and cold; but that would have been nothing if its murkiness had not entirely veiled all traces of the snowy mountains, and given a dull, leaden aspect to the whole scene. Two great objects there were, each in its kind greater than I had ever before seen—the lofty ridge on which we were travelling with the stupendous descent before us—and the stiff, clayey, huge forms of the Great and Little Salève, which bound the valley beyond Geneva, and extend backwards to the threshold of the Alpine region. The lake—at least as seen under such a sky—was not more beautiful than a broad sheet of water always is; not comparable, for example, to Loch Awe, as seen in the descent from Inverary to Dalmally, nor to many views of the Scotch lakes. Though the descent is perhaps four times as great, I do not think, *as I then saw it*, that it presents so lovely or so interesting a succession of pictures, as the descent into the valley of Evesham at Broadway, or that into the vale of Gloucester from Birdlip; for the foreground is not so green, nor are the sides of the road so rich in lovely indentations and waving woods, and peeps into ancillary dells. I thought we never should reach the bottom; but we *did* reach it; found the valley more genial far than the mountain tract; passed through Ferney with as little reverence for its scornful sage as *he* felt for things above him; and, having been stopped at the gate of Geneva for our passport, as if we were dangerous to the little state, happily reached the Crown Hotel, fronting the lake of Geneva; and (excepting the slight—no, not very slight—annoyance of finding that the five o'clock table d'hôte was just over, and that the next would not be holden till eight,) took possession

of excellent bed-rooms, and were soon "shut up in measureless content."

Geneva, though not embosomed in the Paradise in which my erring fancy had imaged it—as cresting a lake lovelier than Loch Lomond, with snowy mountains mirrored in it, is nobly placed, and surrounded with scenes of great interest and beauty. It edges the entire foot of the lake, which terminates however in so narrow a basin, that the lines of building which overlook the water are traversed in a few minutes. The Rhône, gushing out of the lake as from a suddenly-tapped reservoir, divides the line into two unequal parts; the chief part of the city standing on the side opposite the Jura; and, being itself divided by an island, is crossed by two straight bridges forming a broad causeway, but little raised above the water, which connects the river-parted city. The buildings which form the frontier of Geneva to the lake are lofty and handsome, chiefly white, but not otherwise remarkable—the most conspicuous being the great Hôtel des Bergues on the right-hand bank, and our hotel The Crown on the left. The white buildings contrast beautifully with the colour of the lake, which is of the most vivid blue, and which the pleasure-boats, moored to the quays or scattered upon the near water, pleasantly vary.

Except in colour—and this I have seen equalled in some of the little rocky basins of Wales—this portion of the lake is not remarkable; so much of it as is seen from the town is bounded by low sloping banks decked with neat villas, the mountains on either side receding so far as not to be associated with it, and the promised vision of the Alps reflected in its bosom at a distance of sixty miles, being (to us) wholly invisible. The most charming object in the near view is the Rhône, presenting an image of purity and energy combined, as one rarely sees in nature; for a cascade is hurled, as of necessity, over its ledge of rock; but the Rhône seems as of its "own sweet will" to rush into independent

action. You may see the white stones glistening at its bottom at great depth all along the quay and on the bridges, and over these the azure water gushes and glides like a liquid sky. It is almost an awful thing for one, like us unfamiliar with the scene, to thread the narrow pathway on the right-hand bank of the river by the uncertain lights from the shops and coffee-houses ; you fancy the solid earth trembling beneath your feet, and looking at the old gray and yellow range of houses opposite, which almost overhang the river, wonder that they have not long ago been swept away. These houses stand on another island, round which, after quitting the lake, the river foams, and which heightens the effect of its rapidity by contracting its current. Alas ! it does not long retain " its original brightness." Two miles below Geneva it is joined by the Arve, a turbid snow-fed torrent, descending from the valley of Chamouni, in a fatal embrace ; and though it struggles for a while—soon takes the hue of its companion—changes to dirty white—and reflects the heavens no more. It becomes grand—potent—distributes fertility and beauty around it ; but, like the soul once polluted, is polluted for this world !

A flower-bordered path, on the right bank of the lake, leads to some terraced walks, furnished with seats, from which there is a fine view of the country opening towards the Alps. To the right, is the Great Salève ; here appearing an abrupt rocky ridge, like a backbone to the city and its suburbs ; declining thence beyond it, the Little Salève ; to the left, but farther off, a range of rocky hills, and between hills almost filling the middle distance, a large triangular mountain called the Mole, nearly six thousand feet high, and clothed to its top with a pastoral green. Between this mountain and the Little Salève, is the place pointed out as that where Mont Blanc ought to appear, but though we gazed often in that direction in a very bright day, we gazed in vain—probably because the hot sun drew up the moisture which the earth had imbibed from the storms, and so veiled

the great mountain from us. The vestibule, meanwhile, was worthy of the altar. Even in Scotland, we had never seen mountains so great as those which lay before us in unclouded sunshine ; and if the phantasm of Mont Blanc, unseen, had not crushed the realities we saw, we should have thought ourselves repaid *at sight,* for our journey to Geneva.

We found excellent accommodation at The Crown—clean, airy chambers ; a public saloon for dining fronting the lake, and very good fare—not so various as Meurice's, but more decidedly wholesome. After our long journey and unrest, the dinner at eight o'clock, and an early resort to bed, were particularly welcome. The next day, which was unclouded, we spent in lounging about the fair city and its environs ; visited a collection of pictures by Swiss artists, not remarkable for anything but vividness of colouring ; peeped into the Botanic Garden, which seemed scantily furnished with trees and flowers ; and expatiated at leisure in a charming avenue near it, whence the Salève hills—a nearer range of high banks, and now and then a craggy top glistening with snow peering through the openings of the latter—were formed into pictures by the foreground of fine trees under which we wandered. We dined at five ; and after dinner renewed our rambles, among the images of which the vision of the Rhône, shooting along beneath the stars, was the most worthy of remembrance. Before retiring for the night, we engaged a *voiturier,* who agreed, by starting at five o'clock, to convey us to St. Martin in good time to allow us, by the *chars-à-banc* there kept, to reach Chamouni in the evening.

CHAPTER IV.

JOURNEY FROM GENEVA TO CHAMOUNI.

Departure from Geneva—Why it derives so little interest from its Great Names, Calvin, Voltaire, Rousseau—Bonneville—Cluses—Fall of Nant d'Arpenaz—First Great View of Mont Blanc—St. Martin—Journey by Char to Chamouni.

SCARCELY able to sleep for restless anxiety that the day might be fair, we were astir long before the appointed hour—our luggage was packed—our four francs duly received by the Sardinian consul—and our passport entitled us to visit Mont Blanc. The morning was sharp and bright—the carriage came only a quarter of an hour after its time—and nothing seemed to remain between us and the consummation of our wishes, except the apprehension which an enormous mass of dark clouds, edged with crimson, on the southern horizon excited, and which proved to be groundless. We left Geneva by the Porte Rive; passed a rising meadow where we had spent the pleasantest part of yesterday, and proceeded on a shaded road, where I had taken a solitary but delightful walk before breakfast. Looking back upon the city, which here is seen to great advantage over its ramparts, and the end of its blue lake lined with its little fleet of pleasure-boats and steamers, I could not help thinking how slight was the interest cast upon it by three of the greatest names of these latter days, Calvin, Voltaire, and Rousseau, which are so closely associated with its localities. We did not search for the pulpit whence Calvin dealt out damnation; nor for the house in which he ruled and died; nor for the spot on which he perpetrated the murder of Servetus. Neither did we visit the château at Ferney, to handle and filch the

mouldering relics of genius, intoxicated by vanity and paralysed by scorn; to trace the vestiges of that French taste which shut out from view the lake and the mountains: or to luxuriate in the dingy apartments where the attenuated philosopher received the embassies of kings. Neither did we—which is a harder confession to make—seek the house where Rousseau first breathed the breath of feverish existence, or identify the city gate, whence excluded after a long ramble, in fear of a tyrant master, he fled to nourish the fiery indignation which shook the forms and oppressions of the world. Why this indifference to the relics of men who, each in his way, exerted powerful influences on the character and the destinies of the species? Because the two first have nothing in their greatness for the sympathy of their fellows to grasp, and the last, with much that should attract it, has that within which infects and repels. For Calvin—not the architect of a great theological system, but the exhibitor of its sternest aspects—few can cherish any strong sense of personal admiration and gratitude; because even to the most devout believer in his creed, his image is associated only with its severities and terrors. And who can reverence the name of Voltaire, who reverenced nothing? The genius of Rousseau was a different power—it had the elements of goodness as well as greatness, and in the intense consciousness which it awakened of all the movements of the mind of its possessor, appeals strongly through all time to the sympathies of the world. But alas! its defects may be summed up in the words of the Liturgy—"There is no health in it." Those affections which in the heart of youth, should lie pure and unrippled until an angel shall descend to trouble them, were, at their first spring, disturbed and poisoned, and with them the entire intellect was shaken and perverted. Unhappily they were his inspiration; they colour, expand, and distort all his pictures of society and nature, and all his theories; and the result is, that the mighty mind of the

most eloquent of writers is regarded as a sad phenomenon which we pity and wonder at, but can never love. Before the Great Searcher of Hearts there was, perhaps, much in the physical and moral frame of this extraordinary man for merciful allowance; but we cannot allow feelings so tainted as his to make holy the places in which they were developed; or search for "trivial fond records" to add to Confessions which have disclosed so much that is shocking.

Our road having entered Savoy, now brought us very near to the Little Salève on the right, and close to the roots of the Mole on the left, and presently to the steep bank of the Arve flowing between them, and the scene became more delightful every minute. As the wooded outworks of the Mole rose on one side, and the Salève declined on the other, showing the vast slope from the summit of the Great Salève, the dark crags of the Brezon rose before us; and while these grew more definite and prodigious, the snowy tops of the Alps peeped as if out of heaven directly before us. If this partial glimpse of Alpine summits, rather as phenomena in the sky than mighty ribs of earth, did not produce the thrilling sensation which Rogers has embodied in immortal verse, they filled us with delight and curiosity, disturbed by jealousy of the white clouds which we frequently mistook for them. "Is that Mont Blanc?" we asked again and again of our charioteer. "No! not yet." At last the visions of snowy peaks resolved themselves into three white tops, and, "in assured reality," we saw part of the sovereign of European mountains. As we advanced into the defile between the Mole and the Brezon, we lost it; but the black precipices of the Brezon on one side, and the lovely undulations of the Mole on the other, filled the sense of sight with pleasure; which was at its height when we drove into Bonneville, and grew conscious of an appetite for breakfast.

What a delicious hour was that which we spent at Bonneville! There, on the left side was the Mole, seen

rising from the valley to its top 5800 feet high, that is, a full third higher than Snowdon—all green (to the eye at least) to the summit; to the left, a range of rocky precipices, almost as lofty, barren, as its opposite mountain was luxuriant; before us, (all unseen,) another kind of sublime beauty, dimly known as yet, and healthy appetites unpalled even by a biscuit since five o'clock yesterday, rewarded by breakfast! This last, and not lowest luxury, awaited us in a back room on the first floor of "The Crown"—looking direct on the great steeps of the Brezon, (like those you wonder at near the head of some of the Scotch sea-lakes, only loftier and more terrible than they,) and down on a nice, flower-bordered, slate-pebbled small garden, terminating in a range of beehives, and opening by a wicket on the Arve, which ran between us and the rocky mountains. What a mixture of the familiar, the homely, and the sublime! While I admired and gazed, our breakfast drew off my regard, and well it might, for never were a plump roast fowl—ham, "whose pure red and white, nature's own sweet and cunning hand laid on"—fresh butter like that which the Highlands produce in saltless, stainless, primitive delicacy—honeycomb, and decent coffee, more welcome. A bottle of the best white wine the inn afforded, and very satisfactory it was, prolonged the enjoyment, and assuaged the eager beatings of expectation for the catastrophe of the day. A happy set were we four when, taking advantage of the necessity for resting the horses for a longer space than our leisurely breakfast gave, we quitted the inn on foot for Mont Blanc, to be followed, in his own good time, by our driver and his vehicle. From the meanly-built (yet not inhospitable) town, a handsome bridge led us across the Arve almost to the foot of the Brezon, and then, the road turning short round again, beside a handsome column, proceeded along the right bank of the Arve in the direction of our previous route. Slowly and luxuriously we walked on beside a little water-

cressed stream like those near Rickmansworth, between the two giant mountains, contented with the broken shade which the apple-trees on our right cast on us, and really sorry when, some two miles on the road, the carriage overtook us, and we were constrained to the paradox of a less independent but more rapid movement. This accelerated speed soon brought us beyond the outskirts of the Mole—the entire side of which we passed—into a fertile valley or rather nook among the mountains—from which we saw the entire back of the Mole, and again looked to its summit. Almost on a level our charming road now led, through the flickering shade of apple-trees laden with ripe fruit, into a narrower defile than any we had passed, and in which, among hills which threaten to bury it, the little, old, odd town of Cluses stands, actually *pent-housed* by the mountain sides. We did not stop there;—but we could not help feeling the noble contrast between the birthplace of the industrious burgesses, almost burrowed in the mountains, and the free exercise of their mechanical skill, which has for ages made them distinguished through Europe for delicate workmanship—and with it a respect to the weather-stained narrow street, darkened like an alley by the rocks. Turning to the right, and still keeping close companionship with the Arve, we entered the deepest and most romantic pass I have ever threaded. It chiefly recalled to our minds the Höllenthal, which we traversed, last year, in our return from Schaffhausen to Strasburg; but which could not be compared with it except in narrowness and depth;—for the Valley of Hell (the Devil takes all the most beautiful places, as the late Mr. Rowland Hill said he took all the pretty tunes) is an umbrageous depth, in passing through which you make acquaintance with thousands of grand trees—as if the wall of Paradise (in Milton) sprang up on each side of you—or gently opened like a lotos leaf towards the sky—with a little clear rivulet at the bottom, bordered by the loveliest strips of green ever danced on by fairies, and dark columns

of rock so tall and elegant, that they make the wooded steeps above them prodigious. Now this pass of Cluses is among far higher mountains—not *clothed* with verdant beauty, but *decked* with it—combining in the highest degree the beautiful with the sublime. The only defect in the scene was the turbid character of the river—but this was compensated for, if not redeemed, by the gushing forth of a thousand rills from the clayey heights on our left of purest water, which rushed under the road to the river, and by one fountain of surpassing affluence by the road side, which is thought by some to be the outgushing of a little lake high among the hills. We resisted the importunities of a throng of dirty children and old women, who would be guides to some neighbouring caverns—trifles, gewgaws of nature, compared to the objects before us—and held on our way amidst the widening valley. Within the gorge, now spreading into a huge basin of wood-enriched country, we passed the little waterfall of Nant d'Arpenaz—a beautiful miniature of the more celebrated Staubbach Fall which we afterwards saw. The Nant d'Arpenaz is the fall of a small rivulet, which gushes down unseen through fissures of the lofty rock—then, in mid air, leaps from it,—and meeting immediately with little projections, is dashed into fine atoms, floats off some two hundred feet from the ground in an everlasting yet everchanging feather; and, though a portion of the water may be caught by the lower rock and may drizzle down it, the body of water actually disperses;—makes itself "air, into which it vanishes." It is like a spirit embodied —no! not embodied—*shaped*, breaking from the rock—ever perishing yet ever renewed—an image of purity, evanescence, duration! Its substance is as slight as its identity —the most ethereal of all things which in any sense endure —light as "the snowfall in the river"—or a wreath of smoke—yet existing as a waterfall for thousands of years—the Ariel of inanimate matter! I gazed back upon it till it looked like a speck of gossamer cloud;—and sighed for

it even while the vale, expanding wider and wider and becoming grander and grander, dazzled me with its luxuriance and its brightness.

Soon after passing this cascade, we stopped at the Hotel Mont Blanc of St. Martin ;—a small neat inn, where the carriage of the traveller from Geneva is exchanged for a light *char-à-banc*, which alone can traverse the rugged ground between this place and Chamouni. Before us was the rapid Arve, nestling among rich foliage, and bordered by meadows alternately flushed by the pale violet crocusses, and dazzling with large bunches of white flowers. Beyond it the mountains of the Varens receded so as to form the section of an amphitheatre, swelling gently upwards to the feet of huger masses of dark rock which towered to the height of nearly 8000 feet above the valley. If the region of rock were excluded from view, the fertile slopes of those mountains would resemble the sides of the loveliest of the Welsh valleys, with the difference of a prodigious extension of space, as if the effect on the slope were produced by a magnifying-glass, and at the same time, huge forest trees were diminished to shrubs or tufts of furze. To the right the valley narrowed into the defile which we had just passed, which seemed as if quite closed by the rocky sides of the opposing heights. Behind the inn the hills continued rugged and bold and dark, yet nourishing frequent trees in their crevices. To the left, above a dark hill, rose into the clear blue sky the summit of Mont Blanc, with its subject *domes* and attendant *needles*, all robed in dazzling white, except where the steepest precipices were gashed into the snow, and contrasted it with stripes of dark rich brown. This was the first view we had enjoyed of any of the highest Alps, except as a vision in the clouds ; and, surprising as it was, I must confess the effect did not equal my expectations. This falling off might be partly attributable to the mind being filled and perturbed with the loveliness of the vast sunny vale, of a character so entirely different

from those icy pinnacles, which, near to it in reality, were close to it in the picture, and which compelled admiration of colours and shapes as unlike those around us as if they belonged to another world. But there is a reason why Alpine heights, seen at a distance of from twelve to twenty miles by persons who are not familiar with their nearer grandeur, must disappoint an enthusiastic expectation: the masses of snow, almost uniform in colour, do not admit of the sense of distance which the varieties of ordinary scenery convey; and the consequence is, that the eye, not making the proper allowances, embraces the mighty objects as comparatively small; and the mind, instead of being uplifted into regions of perpetual snow, brings down the white masses to the level earth, and then regards them rather with curiosity than admiration. The immediate feeling is a perplexed surprise that there should be just before you heaps of snow not "unsunned," but illuminated by a sun which scorches the earth around you; and that they should give no sign of melting. On one who has had happy experience in Alpine solitudes, and who, therefore, can, in some faint degree, recognise in the glittering heights, the length and breadth and depth which have dwindled into a fairy frostwork to the eye, these forms produce a far nobler impression; but a first sight of the Alps, to produce the thrilling sense of which Rogers speaks, should be obtained from a greater distance, where the intervention of a multitude of other objects gives to the snowy mountains their due proportion, or something approaching to it, in the perspective. If I state the similitude which Mont Blanc, as seen from the bridge which crosses the Arve close to the inn of St. Martin, immediately suggested to me, I shall incur a severer censure than fell on me from a celebrated lady, for comparing the interior lining of the great cavern of Staffa to a sort of celestial barley-sugar, and its guardian outworks of small white columns, washed by the bright sea, to gigantic lozenges, which you expected to see melting away as the tide broke

over them ; yet I do not know why the truth on such a matter should not be spoken. Let me confess, then, that the upper part of Mont Blanc, thus surveyed, seemed to me like nothing so much in nature or art as a gigantic twelfth-cake, which a scapegrace of Titan's "enormous brood" or "younger Saturn," had cut and slashed with wild irregularity, so as to leave the most tempting contrast between the thick crust of sugar and the deep brown indentations beneath it !

We reached St. Martin shortly after two o'clock ; and were detained there for an hour and a half before the arrangements of our journey to Chamouni were completed. It is performed in very slight *chars-à-banc*, in which three passengers only can sit ; and, as we numbered four, it was necessary to procure for my son, who was the most easily detached of our party, a seat in another vehicle ; which we happily accomplished, but which occupied some time. The interval we spent chiefly in a broad balcony in front of the inn, expatiating with full-hearted delight on the scenery before us and on our right, and glancing sometimes with eager curiosity to the snowy wonder on our left ; and not wholly unsolaced by nearer comforts. Our hearty breakfast, indeed, left us no appetite for luncheon ; but, after the good old fashion which Fielding so often recognises, and which his legitimate successor, Dickens, does not repudiate, of calling, in all cases of delay at an inn, "for something for the good of the house," we resolved on a bottle of wine, and committed to our unsophisticated youth the *carte* for his choice. With that felicity which inexperience sometimes hits on, he selected some wine called St. George, not the light claret known by that name among us, but a wine of the Rhine—an admirable choice—of fine ruby colour, and not unlike very old port which has not lost all its original roughness. Thus happily employed, the minutes fled, until the *chars-à-banc* were ready, and we set out jolting and rumbling through the valley, beneath rows of apple and plum trees,

all laden with fruit, which they liberally sprinked along the road. We soon began to ascend a jagged and winding path, still bordered by fruit-trees, and turning round in front of the snowy declivities of the nearest Alps, felt a still more entrancing contrast between heat and snow than we had perceived at St. Martin; for now, seen through the pendent branches of the orchards to our right, the mountain sides looked so close to us that it was difficult to believe that a stone, hurled by a sturdy stripling's arm, would not pierce their radiant covering; yet they were nearly eight miles distant in a straight line! Descending a little, we came to the village of Servoz, where the horses were baited, and whence we sauntered gently on our delightful way, leaving them to follow us. A little onward we came to a small plain, a level ground, surrounded on three sides by green hills, and, on the fourth, looking through a thin belt of trees to the snowy mountains, which suggested a feeling of home, the wish to linger and live and die there, beyond any place I ever saw out of Britain. Its surface was like a bit of green English common dotted with bushes; a stream foamed along it from the hill; and yet, within a stone's-throw, as they seemed, and within a walk in reality, were the mightiest scenes in Europe: what a place to stroll from, to return to, and to rest in! Hence, resuming our seats, we continued to ascend by the side of dark hills, now growing darker as light was waning, until, from a fir-clad eminence, we saw the spire of Chamouni, and entered its famous valley. We soon traced, towering above us in twilight, one of the *needles* of Mont Blanc, and passed in sight of its lower declivities, now content with the presence of the great reality, and just at nightfall reached the village; and found excellent quarters in The Hôtel de l'Union. The hospitable table d'hôte at eight o'clock was just ready; and an excellent dinner crowned the pleasures of a day as full of present delight, and of stores of imperishable recollections and ever-shifting thoughts, as any we have passed, or can desire to pass, in this world!

CHAPTER V.

CHAMOUNI.

If one might suppose Nature studious to exhibit some favourite object with all possible advantages of position, and the happiest attendant circumstances, I should believe she had prepared the Vale of Chamouni for the perfect exhibition of Mont Blanc. It is adapted to this great purpose, both by what it possesses and what it wants; by the wide space which allows the eye to take in at once the entire range of the mountain, and its attendant pinnacles and glaciers; by the dark range of mountain opposite, which allows the opportunity of surveying it from various points of elevation; and by the absence of every other charm which can distract the eye or divert the mind. The valley, unlike any other I have seen in Switzerland, is a plain almost without undulation; the foliage which dots it is scanty and poor; and, although the two rivers, the Arve and the Arveron, flow through it, and receive many brooks which intersect it in various directions, they do not nourish those rich fringes of wood which usually border mountain streams; but rather, by the perpetual inroads of their soapy-coloured waters, spread a stony barrenness along their banks. Although the line of hill opposite Mont Blanc rises to the height of 8000 feet in Mont Breven, it is entirely without snow; and, not being broken into points, offers nothing but sober contrast to the Alpine monarch before it, which occupies the entire side of the valley at a length of at least twelve miles. Thus, from the root to the summit, and from end to end, the snowy-wreathed mountain is seen at a glance; and nothing else. It seems to begin and to end with the valley. There is nothing like it; nothing to suggest that it is part of a

chain of Alps; no other icy tops peer over its lower ridges to carry the mind beyond what the eye embraces; it is "itself alone." Although a forest of dark firs clothes its foundations, and extends irregularly to a considerable elevation, before it meets the snow, the glaciers descend so low as directly to connect the very floor of the valley with the frozen regions, and heighten the magical effect of contrast between the mountain and all around it. Between the two greatest of these the Glacier Bossons and the Mer de Glace, the summit is enthroned; cast majestically a little back from the average line, round and perfectly white, and cresting a region curtained with snow, scarcely broken, except by the dark rocks, called The Grands Mulets, which stand out above mid-way, resembling in form attic windows in a deep house-roof; whence the stainless curtain seems to float down, with careless grace, towards the valley. A little on one side of the summit, and just below it, is the Dôme Gouté, a much larger and grander dome than the summit itself; and beside it huge splintered pinnacles, called *aiguilles*, spotted only with snow, seem to pierce the deep azure of the sky. The range of *aiguilles* and domes extends to the extremities of the valley, broken chiefly by the glacier called the Mer de Glace, which is the icy floor of a deep valley winding in the midst of the mountain, and penetrating its inmost recesses. The masses of dazzling snow presented to the eye are so huge that the mind, even here, only realises the height of the mountain by a great effort—if it indeed realises it at all; so that there are many mountains not half the height, which appear loftier; but I have seen none that, to my apprehension, approaches it in the combination of massive power, and almost celestial purity.

The morning of 26th August was perfectly bright and cloudless; and my position gave me ample facility for enjoying it,—for the chamber which I occupied looked directly on Mont Blanc, the whole expanse of which I could see as I was dressing. After an early and hearty break-

fast, we joined the guides whom we had engaged the preceding evening, and placed by their care on mules, proceeded to ascend to a châlet called The *Flegère*, which we were assured would afford us the most striking and comprehensive view of Mont Blanc we could hope to achieve in the day, and would repay us better than a visit to the Mer de Glace; and we had no reason to regret our compliance with this recommendation. We found both mules and guides deserving of all the praises which visitors to Chamouni have lavished on them—the mules surefooted and sagacious in lovingly edging the precipices and avoiding all real dangers to a miracle—and the guides most attentive, intelligent, and gentle—soothing the apprehensions of the most timid lady novice, and heightening the charm of the grandest scenery by their own unaffected love of all its varieties. To commune with Nature and grow familiar with all her aspects surely softens the manners as much at the least as the study of the liberal arts; and thus she makes these stout Savoyards gentlemen of her own. Under the guidance of two of them, we wound our steep and sultry way up the hill opposite Mont Blanc—sometimes refreshed by the shade of groves of fir, through which the skyey snows glistened with dazzling brightness,—but more frequently over stony declivities, from which springs of pure water, unsullied by the tributes of the glaciers, were breaking, and nurtured little patches of grass or small bushes of mountain-ash radiant with crimson berries. A climbing ride of rather less than three hours brought us to our place of destination—a small cottage—perched on a little plain among gentle grassy undulations, about as high above the village as the highest peak of Snowdon above Llanberris—with huge red rocks behind, forming the ridge on this side the vale, and the entire range of Mont Blanc in front. This point of vision is directly opposite the Mer de Glace, which is seen winding like an enormous frosty road from near the foot into the recesses of the mountain, where, with a graceful

turn, it is hidden. There is no doubt that the view from the top of Mont Breven must be much grander—not merely because the height is more than double—but because the spot is in front of the highest region of Mont Blanc, and must enable the spectator to survey with equal eye the upper and lower half of the mighty mountain. This view, however, quite filled our minds with its sublimities; and "sufficient for the day" was (not "the evil") but the blessing thereof! To complete our gratification, we found here the best bread, butter, and cheese, we tasted in Switzerland or Savoy; delicious cream and wild strawberries, such as had now and then blushed out upon us from the roots of the firs in our ascent; and a bottle of white wine called Swiss champagne, not very much like champagne, but of pleasant brilliancy and sharpness. Here we lounged away an hour, or it might be two, in most luxurious repose; and, after purchasing a sketch of the scene before us, descended to the village;—feasting our eyes and feeding our thoughts with the snowy grandeurs opposite—the perpetual sight of which rendered the descent more striking than the ascent, during which they were only occasionally seen, as our faces were to the *brae*. We reached the hotel about 3 o'clock;—and too late for any distant excursion; but I bent my course towards the Glacier Bossons, in hope to obtain a near view of it; but was perplexed among the little paths intersecting the small farms which occupy the broadest part of the valley, and missed my aim. The arrival of a party, who I am afraid were English, and who insisted on engrossing the attention of the host and his *garçons*, postponed our dinner from five till six, and thus occasioned the loss of a precious hour of daylight in the desultory mood which belongs to the "hope deferred" of that event. While we were dining at the table d'hôte, we were abruptly summoned by the principal *garçon* to the windows to look at Mont Blanc; and saw the most beautiful sight which ever met my eyes—the long ridges of the central mountain clad

in light of pale rose colour, which changed to saffron, and then melted into the cold gray light of a common evening. At the invitation of our kind guides we afterwards accompanied them in a stroll among the corn-fields behind the little church of Chamouni, to see the shadows gradually deepen around the mountain; and did not return until the stars were shining out crisply above the *aiguilles*, on one of which a star seemed almost resting. Why to the thought did the splintered tops of those needles, and the frosted domes above them, connect earth with heaven? The loftiest elevations were nothing to the distance between the earth and the stars—not in the proportion of an atom to an Alp—and yet into what neighbourhood of thought they drew us! This is because although not "nigh to heaven," as Otway describes the mountain-top, it is removed from all the pollution of earth—raised above its cares—unvisited, or rarely visited, by human footsteps—and, therefore, akin to the serene, the unknown, the eternal. Our ideas of celestial objects are, in truth, for the best part negative—of untroubled regions beyond earthly change—and it is by its kindred with these that the mountain summit is associated with the sky,—its physical approach to which is AS NOTHING!

CHAPTER VI.

JOURNEY FROM CHAMOUNI TO INTERLACHEN.

Departure from Chamouni—The Tête Noire—Martigny—The Valley of the Rhône—Ascent to the Baths of Leuk—The Gemmi Pass—Ride by the Lake of Thun to Interlachen.

GLADLY would I have remained in the valley of Chamouni, to study the mountain which it reveals, during the whole of our allotted holiday ; but our plans were otherwise arranged ; and, with many fond regrets, I engaged our friends, the guides, to conduct us on the morrow to Martigny. I rose at dawn to gaze on Mont Blanc, and was rejoiced to find it without a cloud. After a hearty though hasty breakfast, we set forward at half-past seven, on our mules, in the opposite direction to that by which we entered the valley from Geneva, so that we traversed its entire length. In passing the Flegère, we cast upwards a longing lingering look on that little happy nest, planted on its own plot of green ; and rejoiced, not quite like Wordsworth, that Nature has something to show us which is yet unseen, but that she has such a place which we have seen to show us again—if it please God to spare us and bless us with the means of revisiting a valley compared to which that of Rasselas is *unhappy*. The sun became very hot, though, strange to *see*, if not to *tell*, it made no impression on the lightest wreaths of snow to our right, and we were glad to find a flickering shade beneath a row of tall trees near the little church of Argentière, which nestles at this end of the valley. The guides here inquired whether we would proceed by the Tête Noire or the Col de Balme ; the first road lying through a deep glen, the last over a barren hill which shuts in the valley at this extremity. As I had understood

that, though the first route was more replete with beauty, the latter presented one view scarcely excelled in these regions, I expressed my preference for the last ; but the guides so obviously preferred the first, that, yielding rather to their wish than to their pictures of the heat and toil of the more laborious course, I allowed them to have their way ; and we turned to the left, quitting the infant Arve not far from its source. In casting our last glances at the valley, as we ascended a narrow path winding from it, our eyes rested on the Glacier Argentière, which closes its snow range, and is unlike the other glaciers in this—that having no mountain directly above it, it seems to have been poured out of the clouds, and frozen, in falling, into pinnacles of ice, compared to which the Mer de Glace and the rougher Glacier Bossons appear small. Our path itself was one of quiet but exquisite beauty, beside a bank towering up a grassy precipice to a range of trees, and all enamelled with the brightest flowers, about which splendid butterflies were frequently hovering, with a clear stream running down to the right, and great cliffs rising beyond it. After ascending gently for some time, and passing over a level road between expanding hills, we descended into a wide valley, bounded by great rocky mountains not unlike Glencoe in its wildest region—only that *there* all is barren, and here, to the right hand, we looked up to a verdant wall of trees, beneath which we rode. All trace of snow was now lost, so long as we looked before us and on each side ; but, looking back, we saw the breast and top of Mont Blanc through the dark descents of the mountains we had passed, like an urn of crystal. This vision of snow diminished as the precipices folded it in more and more, yet grew more and more ethereal, as the view was confined to the loftiest point ;—then wore the aspect of a white cloud floating over the black tops of our defile, which, except for our long familiarity with the truth, would have been regarded only as a cloud,—and then was gone—let me hope not for ever for

us, but for this summer. The valley now completely shut us in, and we rapidly descended amidst delicious shades—where "many a garden flower grew wild"—and thickets of fruit-trees, which, some months ago, offered spontaneous refreshment to the wayfayer, still retained for us some straggling remnants of a Sicilian fruitfulness in bunches of red-currants and raspberries, while the little pink strawberry peeped out from beneath many of the flints that strewed the road-side. Thus cheered we proceeded to the bottom of the defile, where it meets another, yet narrower, at right angles so as to form a fork, at the point of which, a river, descending from the left through a gully of black rock, poured its waters over a precipitous ledge to meet our companion river, and, thus increased, pursued its way through the defile to the right, into which we turned with it. From this charming spot, cool even in this sultry day, we ascended a narrow steep path cut out of the rock, which, often as black as ebony, rose to a great height above us; until, almost at the summit of the pass, we reached the little inn where we were to rest. This road resembles several in Scotland and North Wales, but has a sterner grandeur than any of its kind, and presents one feature which at once reminded us that we were traversing a country of larger proportions; to the left, over the tops of the defile, and at a considerable distance, appeared, as in air, a mass of rocks, regular as the fortification of a citadel, in which it was difficult not to fancy round towers, bastions, and battlements—but of size so much huger than any mortal work, that it seemed to realise the old nursery fables, and to be the castle of a Giant King of which our Windsor was the baby model. At the small inn we were regaled with an excellent omelette, some rudely-smoked ham, fine currant-jelly, no doubt manufactured from the wild fruits of which we had enjoyed a specimen, wild strawberries and cream, and a bottle of rich Muscadel wine, excellent with water—better without. As the mules and guides, who had

" borne the burthen," as well as " the heat of the day," required longer repose than we who had idly availed ourselves of their strength, we walked onward through the glen, until descending the side of the stream, we found a spot in its lowest depth, cool as a grotto and as mossy, where we lay till they rejoined us. We crossed the stream—ascended a winding path, which formed gallery above gallery—reached a table-land without interest, and traversed it rapidly, until the immense descent into the valley of the Rhône opened before us. As the valley of Chamouni is very high above the level of that into which we now looked, we were not prepared for the length of the descent by the day's previous journey, and were heartily tired of it long before we reached the bottom. Except its enormous depth, it had nothing about it of an Alpine character—lying between richly-cultivated land, and having in front a valley of great width compared even with Chamouni, bounded by lofty but not snowy hills. As we descended, however, we saw through an opening to the right, the snowy sides of the mountains about St. Bernard, which contrasted finely with the sunny uplands through which we were descending. At last—after passing a poor mangled snake, which showed that these regions are not unhaunted by the reptiles which we loathe, yet so strangely linger to observe—we found ourselves on level ground, and at five o'clock, broiled and jolted almost to death, we alighted at the grim Hôtel de la Poste, in the grimmer town of Martigny.

We formed our acquaintance with Martigny under as unfavourable circumstances as can well be conceived ; hot, without a shady room ; tired, with the necessity of settling with our guides and providing for our departure ; and hungry at five, with only the prospect in the long perspective of dinner at seven to cheer us ! Still, I cannot help thinking that few people, unless they belong to the Antiquarian Society, find themselves within it with any other desire than to secure their means of departure. Its aspect

is that of a decayed monastery ; its shops, of which there is a row in a spectral kind of market-place, are about equal to those in Barmouth or Delgelly ; and it seems to owe its life, as it certainly owes its trade, to the monks of St. Bernard, who at once dignify and grace its poor streets by their presence, like a kind of poetic Quakers. Else, it looks like a city—the phantasm of a city—in Hades—" whereto they say no healthful air breathes in"—and where pale ghosts may play at trades and offices. There is a ruined castle proudly perched upon a green but precipitous rock, which, unrefreshed by dinner, we were as unable to climb as to fly to ; the broad Rhône, crossed by a covered bridge, but its colour is a muddy white ; and roads almost as white and as brown as the river. The inn, La Poste, had traces of " the pomp of elder days ;" its interior was a quadrangle, round which a gallery, floored with brick, ran ; and the dining-room, which looked out on a real kitchen-garden, studded with cabbages and garnished with pumpkins, had been the refectory of a convent, and still, with its finely-turned arches, reminded me of the hospitable room in the Palace at Gloucester, where I had often shared the hospitalities of the good and eloquent Bishop. After " wearying for our dinner" (as Sir Walter, in the " Bride of Lammermoor," justly expresses it), and parting with our guides, (I hope with pleasant remembrances on both sides, I am sure on ours), we received the happy summons, and found a plentiful dinner, and forgave Martigny all its sins ; the more readily, as we, after some deliberation, resolved to proceed across the Gemmi to Interlachen, instead of pursuing a backward road to Lausanne, and were enabled to engage a carriage for seven o'clock the next morning to speed us on our journey.

After a breakfast, which, though coarsely served, was substantial, and a long and tiresome waiting for the carriage, we started in a pleasant vehicle, open at the sides, but supplied with curtains to mitigate the assaults of the

sun and the dust, and good post-horses, from Martigny. As we were now on the great road to Italy, we found no difficulty in renewing our travelling facilities, both carriage and horses, at every stage : and thus proceeded rapidly through the valley of the Rhône. The floor of this valley, flat as that of Chamouni, four or five miles in breadth, and full of pestilential marshes from the overflowing of the river, is not only uninteresting, but unpleasant, yet the huge mountain masses at its sides, sometimes affording, through clefts and glens, glimpses of the snowy Alps, made amends for the nearer objects and filled the thoughts. The Rhône itself enlivens, but scarcely graces, the scene, for its colour is of that sickly hue which the melted snow imparts to all the mountain-born streams with which it largely mingles ; and its shingly sides exhibit wastes of stones or poor dwarfish bushes, which were powdered with dust and withering in the sun. The remains of old feudal times are, however, richly scattered on the lower eminences which border this valley.—fine outlines of castellated ruins peep out from its upward-tending glens or peer over its rocky pedestals, until at Sion, a close-built, sweltering Swiss capital, they appeared in perplexing majesty—no less than three castles, occupying grand sites, being at once visible. On, however, we went, broiling beneath a tremendous sun, until, after ascending a hill garnished with fresher trees, and crimsoned with the splendid berries of the mountain ash, we crossed the Rhône, and saw the Burgh of Leuk directly before us, hanging on the steep side of the opposite mountain. Up to this little town we toiled, my son and I on foot, to spare the horses, who seemed ready to drop at every step, and found a nest of alleys piled along the steep, and converging to a small, dingy, flint-paved square, in which there was scarcely a foot of level ground, and in which all the boy population of the place seemed collected. Here we learned that carriages could proceed no further, the *char* road having been destroyed by a storm last winter, and resigned ourselves to the backs

of great ugly mules, on which, after a long delay, our baggage was strapped, and we were perched, to the evident gratification of the juvenile crowd around us. The owners of the mules, or their agents duly authorised in that behalf, were understood to be ready to tender us their company to bring them back, and (which to us was more immediately important) to urge them on; and, therefore, we expected to find some three or four stout Switzers attending us; but we were blessed beyond our hopes; for even when we had by dint of whipping, and caressing, and pulling, obtained a position above the little burgh, and even overtopping its pretty steeple, we found some dozen companions of our journey—men, lads, and one girl—a merry crew, of whom the girl was the merriest; and a queer little merry wench she was. Almost a dwarf, with small sunburnt features and twinkling grey eyes, and a small loose cap, this little wiry lady—a dirty Fenella—ran, danced, and laughed her way for the four long hours, and nine longer miles, which lie between Leuk Burgh and Leuk Baths, (all uphill, except when, I suppose for the sake of making the uphill journey longer, the road once made a deep descent,) now stopping to jest with our eldest guide—now stimulating our youngest by a smart stroke over the shoulders, inflicted by twigs she cut and broke, and renewed and broke, a dozen times over—now shoving, or pretending to shove, the heaviest of the mules onward—now plucking ripe plums from the road side, and offering them to our ladies with a rude courtesy—so the small figure, incomprehensible to us, took her way and cheered ours. It was, however, extremely beautiful—more beautiful than even the ascent to the valley of Chamouni from St. Martin—winding steeply upwards by the edge of a deep and richly-wooded ravine—which, in its windings, shows the backward aspect of the great valley, and directly across that valley a ravine, wider and nobler still, terminating in a grand vision of snowy Alps; and forwards, looking towards huge ramparts of rock, the basement story of the

Gemmi mountain. Half-way between the Burgh and the Baths we reached a little sloping village, in which we found a quaint band of merry-makers, celebrating some holiday, and filling the air with laughter and *un-martial* music. They drew aside from the narrow path to allow us to pass, and, ranged, exhibited a motley but merry crew of lads, from twenty down to fourteen, dressed in military uniform —whether really soldiers or playing at soldiers, we could not ascertain,—and headed by an elderly and grave buffoon, tricked out like a mayor in a melodrama, in a black gown and a white flaxen wig, on the top of which was perched a small three-cornered hat, and beneath which a fair, fresh, wrinkled face, with cheeks as red as a winter-apple, flourished. This Master of the Revels preserved his gravity, and saluted us with a grace all his own ; but the soldier-lads under his command seemed bursting with good humour, and called forth correspondent sallies from *our* lass, who obviously recognised among them some of her acquaintances ; and, although I do not believe they would have deserved Father Mathew's blessing, a happier or more good-natured set of holiday-makers, to whom one would wish " many happy returns of the day," I never met or passed.

As evening deepened into yet lovelier light, we approached the village at the Baths—four thousand feet above the valley—seated in a noble semicircle of the stateliest rocks I ever saw or dreamed of. The flowery greensward swelled up to meet the gigantic round like the shaven turf swelling round some castellated mansion or cherished ruin ; and above, the living rock towered, in form almost as regular as the " proud keep of Windsor with its double belt of kindred and coeval towers." It was like a realisation of the castle which was visioned in the distance as we ascended the path of the Tête Noire ; for it looked like the Castle of Giants ; and I almost wondered when we should find the portal with its attendant monsters. In a huge green recess thus fortressed, stand the Baths and the village of Leuk,

consisting of low wooden hovels, and three or four lofty wooden hotels, all full of windows; and however dreary in winter, now looking all gaiety and life. To one of the hotels we resorted—parting with reluctance from our troop of lively companions, who seemed as fresh and frolicsome after their nine miles up-hill walk as when they started—and found comfortable accommodation, and as good a dinner as travellers who had eaten nothing since breakfast at Martigny could desire. Evening closed in before our table was spread; and I, charmed with the situation, could gladly have remained there for the next day—not to see the Baths full of ladies and gentlemen arrayed in flannel dresses and immersed in hot water up to the chin, eating, drinking, gossiping, flirting, and slandering, which I could fancy just as well as if I saw it—nor to examine the ladders by which the rocks are scaled, and which I can suppose like any ladder which fool-hardy people ascend, and timid ladies and wise men shudder to look upon; but to realise the vast plot of undulating grass which forms a basin among the rocks, and to grow familiar with those huge fortifications of nature which shut out all the world—except that portion of it which they attract within them. But unfortunately I had glanced, as we journeyed from Martigny, on a passage in Mr. Murray's Guide-Book, descriptive of the formidable Pass of the Gemmi, over which we were obliged to travel in order to reach Interlachen, and, more unfortunately still, I had read it aloud; and the effect it produced on my fair companions rendered it impossible to postpone the encounter of its terrors—for one of them was unable to rest from the fear not of the danger but of the fright, and the other was eager to find and to dare the worst; while our young gentleman was desirous, as all young gentlemen should be, of pressing onward and upward; so, being left in a glorious minority of one, I was compelled to resign, and the mules were ordered to be ready at five on the morrow morning.

At daybreak we were all ready and restless to have the

Pass of the Gemmi *over;* but our patience was first put to the proof, for when the hour of departure arrived, neither guides nor mules came with it; and we soon found the mules were yet to be *caught;* and as they were only caught by instalments, it was six o'clock before we fairly started. To the face of the loftiest part of the wall of rock which bound in the platform of Leuk Baths, our course was directed —over turf like a lawn—and among bushes of bright green, but by what crevice or ledge we were to surmount the enormous barrier before us we could not imagine. At length we saw a little dark line, like a pencil scratch jaggedly marking the brown surface of the rock; and, beginning to ascend, found an excellent mulepath four feet wide beginning its wondrous way. Up this the mules paced more readily than they had trodden the soft turf below, and soon we found there was nothing to fear—but the fright. So happily have the facilities afforded by the ledges of the rock been seized on, and so bravely have the obstacles been encountered, that the path not only *is* safe but *seems* safe, for, except in two or three instances, where a sharp angle brings before the eye a precipitous descent, the giddy line is verged by a parapet of rock or brick; while in front towards the top lies a narrow hollow, like an inclined chimney, which looks as safe as two walls of eternal rock can make it. In short, it is a wonderful path—perhaps a greater triumph for the peasant band who made it, than the Simplon Road to Napoleon's engineers—but it is not dangerous, nor half so alarming as we were led to expect by the description in Mr. Murray's book. The backward view, as you approach the top, is very grand and strange—just below is the huge bowl in which the village and its baths stand; then seen, through its mighty sides, the furthest edge of the valley of the Rhône at an immense depth below; beyond the masses of swelling mountain which form its opposite boundary; and far above these, glistening in air, the tops of the chain of Alps which Monte Rosa crowns. The effect of

these is magical. You spy a white form above the fleecy clouds like a triangular balloon—the clouds disperse and show it to be a mountain-top—and then, before your first thrill of wonder has subsided, another snowy slant glitters far higher yet, in the unveiled azure of the sky. From the summit of the pass, a world of these glittering pinnacles was revealed, giving a sense of height, not only greater than Mont Blanc conveyed, either when seen from St. Martin or from Chamouni ; but of another order—a difference, not in degree, but in kind. Of all our glimpses of Alpine elevation yet enjoyed, *this* was by far the most ravishing and extraordinary vision. We did not pause to contemplate it—why should we ?—a glance was enough—hours could do no more ; but wound away beneath the loftiest rocks of the Gemmi mountain, which, in the form of two huge inclining pyramids, beetled over the valley we had quitted. We were nearly 8000 feet above the sea, and the snow lying in long, dingy wreaths about our path which stretched for three miles along the margin of a lake formed of melted snow, bare of all sylvan fringe as the grand basin of Cwn Bwkwn in Merionethshire, but not like that severe and lovely lake of translucent water.

There was, however, herbage for sheep, which they cropped amidst the snow, and when we turned from the lake, and began to descend gently down rugged paths strewed with blocks of granite, we soon found abundance of bright blue flowers and bunches of white daisies or larkspurs which flourished gaily at twice the altitude of Snowdon. Our downward journey lay along the side of a hill, dotted with grey rocks, answering to which, just across a narrow, ugly valley, lay a snowy bank, of so tame a character that it was difficult to regard it with more curiosity or veneration, than a wintry hill-side in England or Wales. In this elevated region we found the châlet at which we were to seek rest for our mules, and breakfast for their riders—a small rude hovel, adorned only by coloured prints of the history of

William Tell, exhibiting the grim patriot, and his apple-headed son, in very strange colours, but the scene of a darker melodramatic legend, than that to which its pictures referred, "if ancestry," and Mr. Murray's Hand-Book, "may be in aught believed;" for here was the domestic tragedy (if such words may ever be associated) transacted which a German horrorist has perpetuated, under the title of "The Twenty-fourth of February;" and Lillo, of George Barnwell notoriety, has done into English as "Fatal Curiosity,"—the frightful incident of a starving father murdering his unknown son for wealth which the victim intends for the slaughterer, with the agreeable addition of a mutual recognition between them in the mortal agony of the son. Though we might have "supped full of horrors" here, we did not incline to breakfast on them, but rewarded our good resolution of crossing the Gemmi, and our braver act of rising at four to do so, by the best cheer which the place afforded—a fowl, eggs, bread, butter, tea, and a bottle of small Champagne, which was accorded to our young gentleman's wish for a sparkle. Before our breakfast arrived, the châlet was filled by parties ascending the pass from this side; of whom a company of heavy-looking German students, and a lively Scotch lady and attendants, were the chief. The long descent which we traversed supplied little to remember; twice it dipped into beauty as the path suddenly declined amidst close coppice-wood, surmounted with tall dark firs, but generally it was tame, until we crossed an angle of furzy common dotted with oak-trees, and reached the banks of the rapid river Kander, which curved out from the dark hills, and foamed along the plain. After a mile and a half lively trotting along a level road, we reached Kandersteg, a village famous for trout, where we procured a carriage and good horses for Interlachen. Thus supplied, we pursued our way at a good pace; at first, through lofty and rocky mountains, but soon emerging from them, through luxuriant meadows and orchards, swelling over rounded hills,

till the blue waters of the lake of Thun streaked through the foliage far below us, and we descended to its margin. The road from this point, overhung by fruit-trees, laden with apples of all hues, and yellow and dark purple plums, sometimes open on the left to the lake, was beautiful; but we were too tired and too hungry to enjoy it. As it wound round one great crankle of the lake after another, and we seemed as far as ever from its head, we began to think we should never reach our journey's end; nor was our collective temper improved by the independent conduct of our charioteer, who made free to raise to the seat beside him, a stout, strapping Swiss lady, who presented us with a back view of a scarlet dingy jacket, instead of the woods and the lake, and increased the burthen to our tired horses. I thought it better to submit than to remonstrate, so the lady had her ride, and we our experience of Bernese costume, and trial of patience;—which last was well-nigh worn out when we reached the head of the lake. Hence we rapidly passed along a strait road, among marshy and willowy grounds, till we crossed a low wooden bridge over a branch of the Aar—gushing, foaming, glistening beneath us—then another bridge of the same character, where the bright blue water was broken by dams and mill-works into exquisite varieties of white foam and blue crystal eddies, gleaming on us like fairy visions; then a little town of toy-like houses, made almost alive by the bright streams of water rushing past them; whence we turned into a broad road, on each side of which, at distances fitting their state, towered huge walnut-trees, and here and there flaunted a large wooden tenement, gay with green shutters and bosomed in flowering shrubs—the boarding-houses of the place—very agreeable to the eye and the fancy, but far less substantial than the mighty trees which outspread their stalwart limbs beside them. Resisting the importunities of our charioteer, who had perhaps learned the art of jobbing from some of the retired diplomatists of this

English colony, and who wished to consign us to some friendly *hospitium*, we compelled him to drive us on to the end of the avenue, where the "Hotel of Interlachen" received us. The hotel proper stands on the right-hand side of the road, close to a grove of stately elms; but a building equally white and green stands almost opposite, in which its overflowing visitors are accommodated with apartments, and which has a charming garden for the delight of all the guests of either side of the way. In this pavilion, for such it seemed, so gay, so airy, so embowered, we obtained excellent rooms, and having secured them, and unfolded our little luggage, we repaired to the garden, to wait the eight o'clock dinner; and beneath the shade of an immense walnut-tree, amidst the lovely lights of a warm and richly-scented evening, beguiled even the sense of hunger, until the hour arrived—the bell rang—and we hurried gladly across the road to receive the reward of our long abstinence in stewed pigeons, roast fowls, salad, and light wine, which left us nothing to wish for.

CHAPTER VII.

INTERLACHEN AND ITS ENVIRONS.

Description of Interlachen—Excursion to the Falls of the Giesbach—Excursion across the Wengern Alp, in front of the Jungfrau, to Grindelwald—A Day of Rest—Departure for Thun.

INTERLACHEN, besides being a central point amidst many grand objects, which may hence be conveniently visited, is surely in itself one of the most charming places in the world. Imagine two noble lakes, each lying among the mountains, joined by a wide, deep, rapid, and translucent river, from the left-hand margin of which rises a long line of hill feathered with rich woods; and that along the right-hand shore, or divided from it only by meadows and gardens, extends the walnut-tree shaded avenue, with its airy pleasure-houses. Suppose yourself in that avenue, and with the murmur of the stream in your ears; look to the right, across a flat vale intersected with trees, to a sterner line of hills, and in the midst of these a mighty break, through which appears a huddled mass of snowy tops, with a round dome, like a globe of snow, of purest white above them, and, a little removed from it, to the left, a peak as white—learn that the peak is the summit of the Jungfrau, and the globe below the untrodden Silver Horn, and you may conceive how lovely Interlachen *is*, and what visions of greatness it discloses. The only apprehension which can break the dream of beauty and grandeur in which you move arises from the English names you read on every house—for all are hotels—and the English voices you hear laughing or whispering as you pass, suggesting the fear that some London acquaintance may join you and bring back the cares, the scandals, and the controversies of the world you

have quitted. To meet a friend who entirely sympathises in your enjoyment may heighten it, if it *can* be heightened; but to meet one whom you know too well to avoid and too little to rejoice in; whom your best moral impulses compel you to seek, and your tastes would induce you to shun; whose moral being (a little world in itself) to you invisible and imperfectly known, presents a perplexing problem to petty, irritating, irritated curiosity, so unlike the great repose of the silent masses which you have travelled to behold, and in whose awful presence you stand—is an event to be feared. Our fears, however, were vain; for during the whole of our tour we never encountered any with whom our acquaintance was in embryo, except one Scotch barrister, whom we had the happiness to know at Edinburgh five years ago, and whom we found at Chamouni; but who, as he was bound for the Mer de Glace while we were destined for the Flegère, only enabled us to agree with his candid admission, that there were finer things in nature than are to be found in Scotland; and in which I am not sure that we were right after all!

Our host, whose name I am sorry that I do not know, deserved to succeed, as much as any man who ever thought with Cato and acted with Sempronius. Although master of the two palace-like buildings, lord of twenty *garçons*, and owner of the delicious walnut-tree in the midst of the garden, and all its attendant delights, he played head-waiter himself; attired in a short linen jacket in the morning, and a short cloth jacket in the evening; up before the sun; courteous and considerate, and kind as if he were an old friend; and ever ready to perform the most menial offices as if he were the youngest and scrubbiest of his *garçons*. The only little weakness we detected, to set off against so much excellence, was his obvious desire that we should not depart by way of Thun,—where there is a much more splendid hotel than his own, though there cannot be one better conducted; but even this was venial, both because it showed, or seemed to

show, how much he valued our good opinion, and because if we had yielded to his suggestion, we should have seen the lake of Lucerne, said to be the grandest in Europe. He recommended us to occupy the morning of the day after our arrival—Thursday, 1st September—by an excursion along the Lake of Brienz to the falls of the Giesbach, and, as soon as breakfast was over, accompanied us himself to a boat and commended us to the care of the boatmen. The boat, though supplied with a table and an awning, was light, and soon began to breast the rapid stream against which our rowers pulled with a vigour, which, considering they were well-stricken in years, surprised us. A few minutes of this hard work brought us into the still waters of the lake; we curved gently round to the right shore, and glided for some miles beneath a lofty bank, alternately rock and coppice, but not very striking nor more beautiful than such a bank must be. If, however, the bank itself had no peculiar charm, its perfect reflection in the rippleless water, afforded us delight as unbroken as the surface of the lake which mirrored it, like a delicious vision of familiar and beloved things. Why is this? Why does the reflection of a common object—a little boat with its one rude steerer, a low cottage, a gaunt poplar, a small nest of low bushes—possess a charm unshared by the reality? Is this only admiration of the dreaming softness which the mirror itself lends? Or does the spell work gently among the deeper elements of our own complex being; among the habits of thought which impel us to prefer the "sweet and cunning" imitations of things even to things themselves; make the indifferent in reality interesting in picture, and bid us then do homage to these most perfect of pictures which are pictures still?—in the longing to cast off the bondage of the flesh, and "transform the real to a dream?"—in the wish to dissolve the palpable in the ethereal, and yet to find in the ethereal images of all we love in the actual? Certain it is, that in the contemplation of these fairy pictures of Nature there is

a peculiar, placid, home-felt delight ; and that, in looking into the downward sky which thus stretches out beneath us, we seem to look into the lowest depths of our own hearts, and find the untroubled serenity there which answers to the sky of our highest aims, and confirms our airiest and purest hopes.

About noon, we reached the spot where the Giesbach rolls over a rock in a sheet of white foam, to disturb the illusion of the lake, for a very small space only. It is a stout mountain rill, which gleaming into light at the top of the loftiest ridge, dashes down the bank, sometimes hidden amid fir-trees, sometimes streaking the hill like a skein of white silk ; and which, in its descent to the lake, takes some half-dozen leaps which are called its "falls." Neither the body of the water nor the appliances of wood and rock are so remarkable as those of several falls in North Wales, even excluding the Swallow Fall and the Falls of the Conway from the competition ; but there is one beautiful peculiarity in the fourth fall as you ascend which has written it in our memories. The stream pours over a projecting rounded rock, so that, descending to its bed, you may walk within the fall, which may be sixty feet in height, and obtain there a notion in little of the exploit which the pilgrims of Niagara perform. The effect in a bright sunshine, which favoured us, is singular and enchanting. You are amazed at the power of so small a stream, which falls, as if of many tons weight, with a noise of thunder, and see the deep-coloured hills beyond the lake, and its dark-blue waters below them, through a crystal veil, where the water is unbroken, and through a brilliant drapery of drops where it is divided ;— reminding you of nature as seen through the medium of Shelley's poetry, shrouded in some passages by a veil as radiant and as pure, and variegated in others by gushing and irradiated fancies, like the glistening water-drops which are here ever passing away and ever renewed. On our return, the boatmen slanted athwart the lake and rowed

under shelter of the left bank, which I preferred to the right, for though less steep, and of no mountain pretension, it was more beautiful in its kind; a succession of lovely slopes covered with thick bushy fruit-trees, meadows, and orchards in freshest green, with a snug village, looking as if it sprang from English earth, and a spire rising as if to an English heaven, and a skeleton of an old castle which might have inspired an English romance,—that is, a romance for the English Circulating Literature. A short, sharp storm of rain, enlivened by a flash or two of summer lightning, ruffled the lake a good deal and our tempers a little, quite destroying the reflections on the water, and disturbing our anticipations of dinner, which was to be eaten at four o'clock, and which we feared we should not reach. Our stout old Switzers, however, exerted themselves, having, I hope, tasted something better than water at "The Falls," and we soon shot along the river-current now bearing us on its own rapid way, landed beneath the dripping walnut-trees, and achieved our places at the table d'hôte to an excellent dinner, which had indeed commenced, but to all the varieties of which our courteous host made us welcome. A charming walk across the covered bridge, and along the opposite hill-side, in a damp but golden evening, to a lone narrow Tower, which looked the "Lord of the Vale;" tea at the hour, and the scene of yesterday's eight o'clock dinner, with a real princess at the head of the table, gracious as princesses should be, attended by ladies-in-waiting as formidable as such ladies often are; and, above all, our arrangement completed with our host for a "glorious day to-morrow," sent us happily to our beds.

The next morning we were all ready at five o'clock, and met in the broad space between our hotel, and its outpost, in hope to start at once, and "begin the noble harvest" of the hills. We found our friend, the landlord, alert, and gay, and kind as before; but our guide and our carriage did not appear, and our patience was severely tried, notwithstanding

the assurances of our host that three of our horses had set forth on their journey before us. Our plan included all that could be pressed into one long day; we were to breakfast at Lauterbrunnen, there to find our three ancillary horses on which we were to cross the Wengern Alp to Grindelwald; there we were to find our carriage-horses and carriage, and return (so fallacious hope suggested) in time to enjoy the eight o'clock table d'hôte at Interlachen. Six o'clock struck on our impatience, before our carriage, an open car drawn by three horses, made its appearance—but *then* we lost no time, and two minutes after its arrival, with an old Swiss guide sharing the seat of the charioteer, we were arranged, and on our road to the Alps. Rapidly and joyously did we pass through the trim inclosures of the broad valley, till we reached the banks of the Luchine, a great milky mountain stream, and soon entered a mountain gorge, down which it rushed, fringed like a Welsh river with dwarf but luxuriant trees, and broken by rocks of dark granite. Onward the valley contracted, until we reached a point where two streams met in the river, whose upward course we had pursued, and where two valleys, or rather glens, diverged—each the home of its own stream. The valley to the right was that of Lauterbrunnen—that to the left, the valley of Grindelwald—down the former, the White Luchine bubbled and gushed—down the latter, the Black Luchine thundered—between both lay the "Alp," which we were this day privileged to master. We proceeded up the right hand defile, along the side of the White Luchine, through a grand yet verdant, and even smiling pass,—such is the valley of Lauterbrunnen—all flushed with verdure up to the tops of its rocky ridges, and above these, noble trees feathering and flaunting triumphant, over its highest steeps. Before us, was a radiant mass of snowy mountains filling the gorge, with the peak of the Jungfrau above them, and the round spotlessness of the Silver Horn just below it—and out of the bosom of the nearer Alps, the stream we were accompanying was seen

creaming down a dark precipice, like frosted lava from an innocent volcano. On the left, a pile of brown gigantic rocks uprose—say rather one rock, for there was perfect unity of style in its mighty irregularities—which seemed like a huge exaggeration of an old English mansion of the age of Henry the Seventh—with pinnacles—clustered chimneys—gable ends—vast porches—fretted, broken, stories—niches for great statues—an entire picture—which might be one of Cattermole's illustrations of Dickens expanded into giant form and petrified! In the narrowest part of the valley we attained the inn called the "Capricorn" (as if the Zodiac were frozen here), and an excellent breakfast to which we did travelling justice—an omelette—cold veal and ham—fresh eggs—delicious butter—coffee, and after and above all, a bottle of wine—happy custom which sanctions the draught—happy climate which allows it! Hence we walked to the famous Staubbach Fall, which poured down near our direct road,—leaving the horses to join us a little below it. We had anticipated the character and the sentiment of this Fall in that of d'Arpenaz on the road to Chamouni;—like that, this consists of watery *dust* thrown into air by the dashing of a stream against projections of tall rock; and this is the fall of a much larger stream, and from a greater height;—but it is not so perfect—so spiritual—and is injured by its collected waters trickling over charred and dirty rock, and which make the collected stream below actually filthy. It presents, however, one effect entirely its own;—and which the bright morning sun rendered complete for our enjoyment—of a small-arched rainbow which seems actually painted on the dingy rock level with the eye—and which, as you descend the drizzling hollow into which the stream drips, descends with you—as hope lowers itself to the gradations of misfortune, and mocks the sufferer still in its lowest depths! The swelling valley directly around the Fall is arid, dusty, and dismal; and we quitted it with pleasure to mount our horses—poor substitutes for the

Chamouni mules—and ascended the opposite hill. Our way rose by steep and narrow lanes, through pretty little farms, —sometimes through sunny meadows sloped like a house-top—sometimes through rich orchards, where boughs laden with fruit bent over us—now up a noble park-like bank crested with old and mighty trees—now through a copse of firs—now beside a huge ravine all black with firs waving and shaking below us—until we rose far beyond the leap of the Staubbach,—saw the fated stream gliding along the upland to its destruction, and "plucked out the heart of its mystery." Turning to the right, we continued to ascend through a region of scanty grass—not unadorned by the faintly-blushing heather, which reminded us of dear old Scotland—until we reached the châlet which stands on the highest point we were bound to achieve. The effect of the vision of the Jungfrau from this spot, grand and surprising, was yet almost as strange as grand. From the natural platform on which you stand, the ground, covered with coarse grass, shelves rapidly to a dark scrubby wood, and directly beyond—as if only a narrow belt of coppice were between—rises into heaven the huge mass of snow-clad mountain, dazzling in purest white, except where broken by black ribs of rock, or by some huge brown storm-swept hollow. It is in vain that you are assured that your eye is distant some miles from the nearest point of Alpine snow on which it rests, and that between your feet and the roots of the opposite mass of Alps is a huge defile, which a shepherd-boy could not traverse in a long summer day; you cannot resist the conviction that you are on the verge of the eternal snow, or the fancy that it is all a delusion—a freak of Nature—who has anticipated the Diorama, and cheats and delights you with an artful picture of her own. You hear the thunder of the unseen avalanches among the recesses of the mountains, and the conviction that you are close to the unmelting miracle which defies the scorching yet becomes yet more intense;—but it shall be disturbed—how! By

the sight of that which, unseen, was so terrible! From some jutting knob, of the size of a cricket-ball, a handful of snow is puffed into the air, and lower down—on the neighbouring slant—you observe veins of white substance creaming down the crevices—like the tinsel streams in the distance of a pretty scene in an Easter melo-drama quickened by a touch of magic wand—and then a little cloud of snow, as from pelting fairies, rises from the frostwork basin—and then a sound as of a thunder-clap—all is still and silent—and this is an avalanche! If you can believe this—can realise the truths that snow and ice have been just dislodged in power to crush a human village—you may believe in the distance at which you stand from the scene, and that your eye is master of icy precipices embracing ten miles' perpendicular ascent; but it is a difficult lesson, and the disproportion between the awful sound and the pretty sight renders it harder. We *saw* two avalanches during the hour and a half which we spent in front of the cottage;—and learned two other illustrations of the truth that, amidst the grandeurs of the universe, "seeing" is *not* always "believing." While we were engrossed by the strange and mighty spectacle in front, all was bustle within the châlet—boiling, frying, and eating went on as merrily as among lower mortals; for here, it would seem, the guides were accustomed to dine at the good early German hour, and a party of German students found youthful appetites to match. We were still too mindful of the breakfast we had enjoyed at the "Capricorn," and had too respectful an anticipation of the dinner which we had pledged ourselves to eat at Interlachen, to share in the solid festivities of the mountain summit; so we divided amongst us a bottle of sharp white-wine, and corrected its acidity with a little of the real Kirschwasser, and awaited the pleasure of our guides and our horses in amazed contemplation of the wonders revealed to us.

Our descent into the valley of Grindelwald was long, tedious, cold and wet; for mist came on, thickening into

rain, and, long before we reached the bottom of the hill, we were quite tired and half drowned. The glory of the day had faded before we set out from the châlet; and every downward step which we took, walking beside our clumsy lumbering horses in preference to riding them, brought us through a spectral forest of dead trees, killed by an avalanche, into a dull wet region, which still, we could perceive, had a stern grandeur of its own. Wet, tired, beneath a leaden sky,—the duller from the radiant sunlight in which we had basked and been baked for many days,—we were unable to do justice to the valley of Grindelwald, into which our descent led us; but surely it must be one of the noblest in Switzerland, or in the world. Formed by the huge slants of the Wengern Alp on the one side, and of the Faulhorn on the other, all green,—but solemn, dusky green,—covering the rock like a velvet pall, it is walled in by three huge Alps, conical in form, between whose summits pour down two glaciers, far larger in appearance than those of Chamouni, soiled and dull in colour, which seem to connect the valley with the lower clouds; all dingy, yet solemn and wild! The brightest object in this scene of dim grandeur was an arch in the nearest glacier, from which the Black Luchine issues, and which, even unsunned as then, and at the distance whence we observed it, wore an aspect of ethereal beauty, the interior of the arch being of the most delicate green. The inn, at which we waited until the horses which had brought our carriage to meet us were ready for the homeward journey, is nobly placed on an eminence forming the root of the Faulhorn Mountain, and although ruder than our gay hostelry at Interlachen, well provided with good cheer, and well attended by a civil hostess. We regretted that we had not made our arrangements to dine and sleep there instead of returning to Interlachen: for the entire circuit is too long for any but one of the longest days of summer, and the objects of vision too mighty for any one day's comprehension. Wet

and cold, notwithstanding the refreshment of a good luncheon, (which the wisdom of the wiser of our party converted into dinner,) we were not attuned to the admiration of the bleak and severe beauties, the grand contrasts of ice and of fir, which this great valley presents, but received sufficient impression of its majestic features to induce the resolution that we would pay them due homage if ever we revisit the Alps. At length, as evening thickened, we remounted our carriage, and following the course of the Black Luchine, which roared and flashed beside us, traversed the dark valley of Grindelwald till we reached the union of the streams: and, by the road which had enchanted us in the morning light, reached our inn at Interlachen, at nine o'clock, an hour after that at which we promised to return to dinner, but not too late to obtain all the comforts which fatigue allowed us to enjoy.

Thursday, 3d September, presented us with the variety of a wet day; and except that the heavy rain seemed to threaten a continuance of wet weather, I did not regret the change, for it brought with it an excuse for rest and season for thought. It also afforded an opportunity of reading the London newspapers, which are supplied here, only some five days old, at a reading-room of which you may become free for half a franc a day. I read, with amazingly little interest, the successive nights' debate on the decisive question of Whig or Tory administration; and learned the extent of Sir Robert Peel's majority without murmuring at the great reverse of party affairs, fixed apparently for many years. I felt, that true freedom and progressive improvement on the one hand, and the safety of our institutions on the other, are happily secured against time and violent assault; and these secured, mere party differences dwindle to nothing in the presence of the Alps.—After dinner, the rain abated; and the rest of our party set out to visit the ruined castle of Unterseen, which is said to have been in Byron's contemplation as the abode of his Manfred: but as I did

not sympathise at the time either with Manfred or Byron, I contented myself with a gentler stroll. Night came on; rain again pelted down; and I spent two hours in serious alarm for their safety; but, at last, they returned safe and weary, and the misery of my suspense (how unlike the impression of joy!) soon dwindled into nothing.

CHAPTER VIII.

RETURN FROM SWITZERLAND TO LONDON.

Departure from Interlachen—Lake of Thun—Berne—Journey from Berne to Basle — Baden-Baden — Mannheim—Heidelberg—Descent of the Rhine—A glimpse of Cologne—Voyage Home.

WE had been in a state of half-agreeable uncertainty as to our course on leaving Interlachen, whether we should pass on to Lucerne across the mountain from Brienz, or go by the steam-boat to Thun; and now the threatening appearance of the weather combined with a satiety of mountain travel on horseback to determine us in favour of the latter course. We almost repented it when we rose on the following day—Friday, 4th Sept.—and found the morning clear, bright, soft, and balmy, radiant, and yet more delicious from the rain; however, our course was decided, and it was too late to alter it. At ten o'clock we left Interlachen, and, after a charming voyage of two hours on the lake of Thun, into which the peaked Niesen nods, and in whose calm depths the snowy tops of some of the high Bernese Alps are mirrored, reached the hotel at Thun, a really charming château, bowered in luxurious gardens, and looking on the broad green flood of the Aar, which here enters the lake. We were bent on speed, however, and remained no longer than was necessary for us to engage a *voiture* and driver to convey us to Berne; they were soon ready, and we took the road, casting many a longing look on the Alps we were quitting. Except when the elevation of the road enabled us to catch a glimpse of those mighty forms, now confused by the clouds, our journey lay through a tame fertile country, of which the orchards, laden with apples, were the chief ornament of a tamer Gloucestershire.

At four, we reached the great inn, the Falcon, at Berne, an enormous hostelry, and partook of an excellent dinner at the table d'hôte, which only lasted too long to allow us to see the grand panorama of the Bernese Alps from the ramparts, before sunset, and bade them a solemn farewell. Our hurry, indeed, to avail ourselves of the waning light, defeated its own purpose; for taking an imperfect direction, we toiled, wandering about for that which was close to us, and found it by accident when almost too late. We stood upon the ramparts, beneath the shade of huge old trees, and looked over the plain to the horizon, where a long range of snowy mountains extended to the utmost reach of the eye; the roseate hues of sunset had faded from them, but they were still sublime in the twilight. Directly below the steep eminence on which we stood, some lads of the College were improving the time by gymnastic exercises, for which the varied apparatus of poles, horses, parallel bars, ladders, and swings, were liberally provided:—a pleasant sight—especially after our experience of the smoking, drinking, roaring habits of Young Germany. We lingered till the forms of the distant Alps could be discerned no longer; then searched for them with aching eyes, and returned to the protection of the Falcon. Our *voiturier*, a cheerful good-natured fellow, strongly urged us to take his carriage and himself to Basle, and offered to perform the journey of sixty-four miles in the day, with his pair of stout horses, if we would start at five. To this reasonable proposition we assented; and having paid our bill, obtained, (not without difficulty) our viséd passports, and pronounced Lord Palmerston's name without blessing it, we retired to rest, with hearts sinking within us on leaving the mountains.

At four on Saturday, 5th September, we were astir; all ready, with baggage in hand, at five; and at that hour found our friend and his carriage at the heavy gate, which slowly and sleepily opened to exclude us. We rattled rapidly over the stones of Berne; crossed the bridge, and

ascended a long hill by a broad road, lined with noble trees, which commanded a full view of the city beneath it, the grey massiveness of which harmonised most happily with the grey light of early morning. It vividly reminded me of Shrewsbury—"like, but oh, how different!" as if Shrewsbury, whose old familiar aspects I love so well, were presented now "in the *dis*-similitude of a dream." From this point of vision it appears to be almost encircled by the Aar, as Shrewsbury is by the Severn; its buildings cluster thickly from the banks on the mound of the promontory, like those of Shrewsbury; and if the river Aar is much broader than the Severn, and its colour, pure deep-azure, is more celestial, less earthy, than that of our loved Salopian stream; and if there is a grander massiveness about the dense grey halls and towers of Berne,—the sense of purity and elevation conveyed by the graceful spires of Shrewsbury, lancing up into the sky, makes the balance even. Soon after we lost sight of Berne the rain came on densely, and lasted till we came in sight of Basle, just as the sun was setting. Wet, however, as it was, the passage through the narrow winding passes of the diminished range of the Jura presented many scenes of mountain loveliness of the gentler cast, like the ascents and descents of a road in Wales. As evening was drawing in, we were right glad to catch a glimpse of the opposite bank of the Rhine, and to know we were approaching that great historic river, though we did not discern its waters. "We saw not, but we felt that it was there." It was nearly dark when we entered Basle, and quite dark before we were housed at the great hotel of the Three Kings, so that we saw nothing of the city but tall houses lining flinty streets, dark towers, and very bright shops, chiefly for the sale of tobacco and cigars, in which groups of rough-looking young men were smoking with all their might. These were, no doubt, students of the University, whom Mr. William Howitt, the most genial of all Quakers,

seems to regard as a nobler and more generous race than the undergraduates of Oxford. As Cobbett spitefully and unjustly said of the gentlemen of the press—"Only look at them!" and decide whether this comparative estimate can be just. One inferiority, to be sure, our youths must confess, and which has probably influenced our gentle "friend" against them—they do not decide their quarrels either by the sword or pistol, like his German favourites. A duel never occurs among the students of our Universities: and yet they are in the heyday of life; many of them the spoiled children of their parents, and more of their fortunes; and brought constantly in close collision; a circumstance which is alone sufficient to refute the sophism which would preserve the barbarity and absurdity of duelling as an essential safeguard of good manners. I suspect the truth to be that our friend Howitt, like other frail and friendly children of Adam, sometimes admires things in proportion as they are distant and forbidden; and being a man affirmed to keep the peace, thinks it must be a very fine thing to have courage to break it. There is unquestionably much generous friendship among these young men, strong love of country, and some love of learning; but if any one thinks they are to be compared with the Youth of the two old English Universities, in blood or breeding, I have only to address to him Cobbett's advice—"Go and see them!"

At five next morning we embarked in a steam-boat on the Rhine,—which here bears its noblest character of a broad, definite, green, and rapid torrent, rushing by the town with majestic power,—for Baden-Baden; and soon regretting the change of this noble individuality, for illimitable waste of water chequered with low green islands, floated serenely on, without an event—except an excellent breakfast, and a long detention at the bridge of Kehl, till we reached the landing-place opposite Baden, about four o'clock in a hot summer's afternoon. Here, forsaking our cool highway, we were crammed into an omnibus, and jolted along a sandy

road through level fields, chequered here and there with stunted fruit-trees, at the rate of three miles an hour. At length, however, we could perceive, through the loop-holes of our hot prison, that we were approaching a fairer region. Low hills—low, yet swelling downwards from lofty ridges—now descended to a fertile valley, through which we paced, each turn of the road bringing us deeper into woodland beauty; the gentle descents were yellow with great melons lying carelessly on the ground in lazy luxury, rather than condescending to grow; as if some gigantic Pomona had cast her spoils around, in defiance of meaner nature; until the heights were covered with pavilion-like houses, the road lined with hotels, and, in the midst of gay toy-shops, and flowering shrubs, and green-shuttered white "Pensions," we were set down at the Hotel d'Angleterre, and introduced, at the end of the feast, to a table d'hôte of Baden-Baden. All due attention was, however, paid to us; we dined, and drained our "draughts of Rhenish down;" and then followed all the Baden world to that world within it, where I cannot say that "Hope never comes," but where "Torture unconsumed still urges"—in plain English, to the great, legalised, legitimate Hell! Ours was but a glimpse of Erebus—transient as that of Ulysses, and almost as spectral. We were mere "barren spectators" —we "toiled not" at whist, "neither did we spin" at roulette; but kept our English respectability unruffled in English silence;—so that it is hardly fair to give our stolen impressions of the great pleasure-house. "Through what varieties of untried being" we might have passed, if we, who came to stare, had "remained to *play*," it is as idle to cogitate as "what lay the Sirens sang," or any other of Sir Thomas Browne's questionings—but actual gaming apart, with which all places must be the same, surely Baden-Baden must be delightful! To linger out a luxurious dreamy sojourn as in a fairy bower, just on the edges of romance and of dissipation; to stroll through flickering glades

leading into the wild forest region, not knowing or caring whither ; to dream at hot noontide of dark shapes of German fantasy, or peep curiously and idly into the maze of German metaphysics, and then, "at sober eve," or merry eve, as it might be, to enter the enchanted Palace of Passion, and gaze on the figures of winners and losers as at the chimeras of a dream ; to realise a mortal Comus in the dainty imaginations of the woods, and in the Circean revelries of the evening gamesters, must be pleasant pastime for a few summer days. We could not enjoy more than one ravishing glimpse, for we were homeward-bound ; and at an early hour the next day, we heroically remounted the omnibus, casting "many a longing look" at the scene of woodland gaieties we were quitting, and regained the port of Ibetstein, our landing-place of yesterday, where we awaited the arrival of the steam-boat which was to bear us onward to Mannheim.

The hour which we spent at Ibetstein before our vessel arrived, was to me a very delicious one. The bank of the Rhine here, scarcely above the surface of the broad water, is tufted with little coppices of dwarf willow, and other low bushes, among which nestled frequent plots of blue and white flowers, and brambles trailed fruitful with berries like a dark raspberry, covered with a fine plum-like bloom, a richer kind of blackberry. To stroll through the little intersecting openings of these unpretending woods, beside the mighty stream, was to acquire a kind of familiar interest in its living course ; as if the thousand pleasant thoughts I have cherished many years ago among the thickets of the Thames or Kennett, or yet meaner brook, had been all transferred to this great river, and by virtue of such musings beside small and slow-moving streams, I had acquired a right of familiarity with the Rhine thus edged by kindred thickets. So by an earnest love of small things, we may attain a kind of association with the noblest, and feel entitled to cherish a love and a pride in them !

We dined agreeably on board the steam-boat, and reached

a new and magnificent hotel at Mannheim in the cool of the evening. The next morning I rose at day-break, and, in the still coolness of the morning, walked across the Rhine by the bridge of fifty boats, and strolled on the opposite bank—delighted to watch the minarets and turrets and domes of Mannheim gradually lighted up by the sun. Its exterior reminds one of the pictures of Turkish cities with their mosques ;—but its interior, though clean and regular, is tiresome from its sameness—streets crossing at right angles, without grandeur to make uniformity noble. After breakfast we went by the railroad to Heidelberg—a journey of some hour and a half—and saw everything but the Great Tun—which we thought it better to imagine full, than to see empty. Having heard and read much of the beauty of this place, I was disappointed—the ruins of the Palace are vast, but too miscellaneous for grandeur—not blending into one great idea ; and the prospect from them, though pleasing, is not comparable to that from Goodrich Castle, and far inferior to that from the Wynd Cliff, or even from Chepstow. The students of the University, whom we saw lounging in the long and lovely walk by which we entered the town, seemed of a superior order to those whom we have encountered at other German places of learning, beer-drinking and smoking—more like ingenuous youths and less like apprentices to banditti. We returned to the four o'clock table d'hôte—and were sorry to find we had it all to ourselves—and, being thus alone, beguiled the evening by witnessing an exhibition of horsemanship, very surprising, but very inferior in grace to Ducrow's. There was, indeed, more of the gymnastic than of the equestrian in the performance ; and though the German gymnastic exercises are admirable exercises for the muscles of those who practise them, they are wholly destitute of charm for spectators—not having the grace of motion or the semblance of enjoyment to recommend them.

We started at six, to pursue our voyage down the Rhine,

in a moist and threatening morning—which, as we had above one hundred miles of water between us and night, cast its damp on our spirits. The day, however, brightened —breakfast, ordered under my son's liberal auspices, cheered us—and by the time we reached the bridge at Mayence, the day was glorious and we were happy. We glided through the same scenes of castellated and storied beauty through which we had passed twice last year—where the Rhine, collecting its force after its spendthrift youth, presents its maturity of noble images—and recalling the more recent vision of the Seine, did not find the latter sink in the comparison. At ten at night we reached Cologne ; and guided more by precedent than wisdom, crossed the bridge to find our old quarters at the huge hotel, Belle Vue, where we partook of a coarse supper in a room like the hall of a barrack, and regretted we had not sought a nearer *hospitium*—which could not be worse. Prussian common soldiers are often gentlemen, and usually gentle—but the central table was occupied by very noisy youths in uniform, and still noisier ladies streaming in ribbands—and the entire aspect of affairs was too gay for our sober fatigue. Next morning we felt the full force of our folly in trusting even to Mr. Murray's Guide-Book against our own experiences, in having to drag our baggage across the Rhine to the steam-boat, which lay on the Cologne side, and which started at seven. Fortunately, however, we had one half hour, after we had secured our passage and deposited our load, to obtain a glimpse of the divinest interior in the world—that of the Cathedral—at this early hour generously expanding its doors to devout worshippers. Perhaps its heavenly beauty —thus glimmering on our hurry in the pure light of an unclouded morning—produced a more characteristic impression than it could have done in leisurely survey of a thing too fair for earth—too ethereal for time. This was our last relish of Continental beauty ; and I will not injure it by recalling our long dull voyage down the Lower Rhine—

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including a night aground—or the nuisances of the hotel at Rotterdam—but think of it as recalled, with the other mighty and beautiful objects of our journey, during our tranquil and lovely passage from Rotterdam to London over a waveless sea of crystal—beneath an unclouded sky—in which the faint crescent of the moon hung as if blessing a fairy scene. We reached home on the morning of the 12th September—" contented and grateful."

PART II.

THE ALPS REVISITED;

AUGUST—SEPTEMBER.

1842.

THE ALPS REVISITED.

PART II.

CHAPTER I.

JOURNEY FROM LONDON TO COLOGNE.

Holiday Sensations—Voyage down the Thames—Arrival at Antwerp—High Mass in the Cathedral—Joyous Dinner at Antwerp—Railway Journey to Liége—Description of Liége at Night and in the Morning—Journey by Diligence to Aix-la-Chapelle—An Early Walk at Aix—Journey by Railway to Cologne and the Rhine.

WITH what restless pleasure did I seek the Regent Circus on the 13th August, to secure berths for my son and myself on board the good steam-ship "Antwerpen," which bore us two years ago on our first vision of the Rhine, and first glimpse of Switzerland! The day before, I had left Gloucester and all the low fevers of circuit care, to plunge into the delights of our glorious holidays, known among men by those inadequate terms, "The Long Vacation;" yet it was only this morning that I felt "the sober certainty" of its "waking bliss." My homeward journey, even when mounting the stony pinnacle of Birdlip, and drinking in the sunlit beauty of the Vale of Gloucester, was perplexed and almost saddened by the resolute intrusion of images of past labours which would not be dispelled; the influences of *Nisi Prius* still darkened hope and joy, as the phantoms of a hideous dream linger awhile in the light of day; and I could not stifle vain regrets for opportunities lost, temper idly ruffled, adverse witnesses treated too often as if

they were enemies—the flaws, and starts, omissions and mistakes incidental to excited advocacy—faults of the moment, but admitting of no repair. But to-day, invigorated by the air of home, I bid these shadows defiance; they are gone till the Second of November; and all the interval is mine to live in! Notwithstanding my veneration for school-day experiences, I doubt whether the realisation of the Midsummer Holidays—thrilling as it was—quite equalled the first sense of leisure which atttends the breaking up of the long circuit for the "Long Vacation." Yet there must be always some alloy in human felicity; and mine consisted in the absence of the fair partners of my summer excursion of former years, who had left my boy and me to be sole companions in our second journey to the Alps—for to them—notwithstanding our limited allowance of scarce four weeks for travelling—we were bound. As they were, however, far away, engaged in other duties, we resigned ourselves to our "unhoused free condition;" and I glided through the Strand with heedless steps to the office in the Circus. I looked over the programme there exhibited of densely-shelved humanity, eager to find in its index the names of some old and dear friends with whom we had hoped to quit England;—they had alas! been faithless—allured by the rival vessel called "The Wilberforce," a larger vessel but not a better. I was soon reconciled to this disappointment, contented to think that it might be better to be quite alone for twenty-four hours upon the calm rivers and the desolate sea after the year's turmoil, and feast in luxurious uncertainty of anticipation on the glories which were to be unfolded in German dells and on Alpine heights;—and to wait for the rest till our merry meeting with our friends at Antwerp. In a joyful flurry, I selected two of the few unappropriated shelves for our brief voyage; paid the fare without knowing what it was or where I stood; overleaping at a bound of thought the Thames, the Channel, and the Scheldt, and

growing dizzy among shadowy Alps, clad in that fantastic vapour which can transform earth's most awful realities into noontide dreams.

The morning which dawned was as fair and deliciously hot as a languid idler could desire—making idleness almost duty—and the soft rich splendour of which, as we had next to nothing to do, and everything to enjoy, entirely harmonized with our doings and enjoyings. We packed all our luggage in two bags, each capable of being carried in the hand,—one with perfect facility, the other rendered plethoric by my sickly craving after books, which added Carlyle's Lectures on Hero Worship and Tennyson's Poems, at the last moment, to one of those Scotch Romances which serve me over and over again for travelling companions—the dearer on every perusal. At eleven o'clock the carriage which was to convey us to the Tower appeared; no household or parting cares remained to delay our departure, and in a few minutes we were rolling through the streets of the city, with a glory-tinged intellectual horizon expanding before us. Arrived at the Tower Stairs, we had to resist the importunities of sturdy impostors in the garb of watermen, who kindly offered to row us to our steam-ship, which they said truly "was lying a little way off;" but suppressing the fact, that it lay moored to the wharf! and that, therefore, only a taste for anticipating "the dangers of the sea" by seeking the sharper perils of the river, could justify the preference for a brief voyage in "a trim-built wherry" to a shorter walk on the dry land. Light of luggage and heart we stepped on board our vessel—the good ship Antwerpen—which we recognised as that whence we took our first glimpse of an outlandish town, and first realised the truth that there are "livers out of Britain." Apart from those personal reminiscences which clustered about the ship, we had abundant reason to be satisfied with our choice. The Antwerpen is a noble vessel; broader in proportion to its length than any I recollect to have steamed

in, and therefore affording that pleasant surprise which renders a discovery of space or excellence beyond pretension so agreeable; clean to a miracle; and remarkably free from all scents of varnish, paint, oil, and the inconceivable ingredients of the magic cauldron by which our maritime machines are winged. The crew were smart, civil Belgians, interspersed with a good-humoured-looking Dutch boy or two; but the steward was Scotch—a weather-stained likeness of Mr. Sheridan Knowles—reminding us of many triumphant *first nights* and generous heart-thrills; and the Captain, a frank and intelligent young man, rejoicing in the good English household name of Thomas Jackson: so we felt at once at home and abroad on the neutral deck, combining the ease of familiarity with the sense of change and progress.

It has been well said that the River Thames is the noblest highway in England; and assuredly it is suggestive of the pleasantest recollections to all who have been holiday travellers, as it excels all other highways in the multitude of delightful places to which it leads. The short excursions to Margate and Ramsgate, where I made my first acquaintance with the ocean—the serious coastings of the whole east of England, in stately Leith steamers, to visit and revisit that loveliest city of the world, where Jeffrey, after casting for many years the variegated lights of his fancy over literature, still, in conversation, gay as his writings, "knit with the graces" and regardless of the hours, leads on eternal spring;" where Wilson still detains his enchanted friends with the most eloquent music of thought, through the happiest of Ambrosial nights; and where all things, from the flint-paved alley at the foot of the massive nine-storied houses, to the sudden loneliness of the solemn glens beneath Arthur's Seat, speak of the last and greatest benefactor whom Scotland gave to mankind;—and the homeward crossings of the Channel from the Continent, laden with recollections of France, Germany, and Switzerland; all

these rendered to me the Thames, not only a glorious but a sacred way. And now the hot and dazzling sun, glistening on all the near objects, and raising a fleecy haze over the distance, and the soft, light, lazy airs, breathing capriciously from all quarters in the windings of the expanding river, harmonised with the faint and confused memories which shimmered over the calm mirror in the mind. The only event which occurred to disturb the spell was dinner—a plain, clean, English dinner of one course, "reckoning fish as nothing;" after the example of the great Elliston, who thus, when yielding his imperial sanction to Charles Lamb's hospitality, struck the whole finny race into airy nothingness; which we did not relish the less, because it was the last of the kind we should partake of for many days. After dinner, the day declined into softer beauty; and if my heart was stirred, it was "idly stirred," by the glistening of the reflected sunset on the windows, and on the windmill-shafts, and on the church-towers of Margate; recalling kindred gleams of those anxious weeks which, many years ago, I spent with my wife and infants in one of those very illuminated houses in Fort Crescent, when my tall companion was a little child, and health was sought by us for a younger one, Charles Lamb's god-child, who is now in regions which such an evening brings near us! The receding coast and the deepening twilight enabled me less clearly to trace out the cliffs along the brink of which I used to wander in after-days, when we made Ramsgate our holiday home; and when passing Broadstairs and the North Foreland Light-house, through fields scented with clover and musical with bees, I used to wander to a chasm in the cliff at Kingsgate, trying to embody a faint dream of heroic excellence, and so composing the early scenes of my first attempt at dramatic writing. Ramsgate itself was beyond our ken—but the Goodwin lights, which used to people our October evenings with "strange images of death," were just breaking into their nightly life, which the glory of this evening scarcely

allowed to be life. Beautiful as fine summer evenings always are by sea or land, this was one not to be confounded with the thousand that have shed their loveliness into our hearts. After the sun had slowly dipped into the sea, the western sky opened the aspect of a realm of magic beauty more involved than ever I witnessed before ; sea of sapphire within sea of sapphire, with rocks of purple and gold, fading upwards into deepest violet,—which, as I paced the vessel with steps no longer languid, impelled me almost (I am not sure they did not quite) to break out into these rapturous lines of Wordsworth, which reduce the hopes of futurity into possession :—

> " Come forth ye drooping old men, look abroad,
> And see to what fair countries ye are bound !"

And long, very long, did the vision of sky wait upon the ocean ; reluctantly fading from it, as the large moon, modest at first, scarcely noticed, in her pale lemon-coloured grace, gradually became empress of the scene. Waking from a long and sweet reverie, I was startled to find it already night ; the stars shining through the net-work of the cordage and above the masts and the chimney, which, in this light, grew akin to them ; and see ! what huge mass of sable crosses the path of gold which the moon has laid down, like a celestial railway on the sea ; some Dutch schooner, perhaps, black as night, where night wears its own hue, and does not borrow the tints of heaven ! Long after midnight I remained on the deck ; and was glad to be recalled to common things by the cheerful voice of our captain, whose advice to seek my berth I followed, and lifted myself into it without a qualm. Light, pleasant and short was my slumber, —for, before five, the dull gleam through the thick glass of my small round peep-hole informed me that the day had broken, and I was soon on the deck to welcome it. The sun was just rising over the dead flat of Walcheren—and such a rising sun I never hailed before. I must confess I have not seen many ; being of opinion with the best of

Friars, that "it argues a distempered head so soon to bid good-morrow to the sun;" but this sun was really worth rising to see, even from a more seductive couch than a berth in a steam-ship. It wrought a more potent enchantment than merely "clothing the palpable and the familiar in golden exhalations of the dawn;" it studded the low shelving mud-bank of the Scheldt with jewelled brightness—reminding me of the rich solemn glare of the copper-tinged earth fringed with bright crystals in the clefts far up Snowdon—and transformed the rank grass and coarse rushes on its edges into delicate films of waving light. The vision did not, however, linger, like that of evening, but soon dissolved into the universal brightness of a most sultry day. The tall slender tower of the great cathedral was soon discerned in the distance—a glorious mark; we glided softly towards it between the low banks of the river, illustrated only by Patience moulded into the shape of cows; and just as the clocks in Antwerp were chiming *eight* we landed, each with his little bag—inspected by the courteous custom-house officers before landing—on the quay at Antwerp, in the presence of the angels and saints of its cathedral.

Antwerp looked gay—"all bright and glittering in the smokeless air"—but sober and sad compared to *the* Antwerp which I saw first two years ago, on such a sultry morning for the first time, then streamer-tipped and garlanded for the Feast of Rubens. The surprise then—the beautiful strangeness of the scene to one who had never beheld a foreign city except Lisbon, and who was not aware of the festival—was as if I had lighted upon a world of pageantry and theatrical grace, never before shown except in the mirror of the stage. The ships and steamers and boats in the harbour were all streaming with flags—crimson, blue, yellow, glaring and flashing in the sun;—the airy top of the cathedral bristled with flags, like gracious old age emulating youth in innocent gladness—trees plucked from their native woods, and stuck into the arid earth to live and wither a

few days, (but proud so to live and wither in honour of one who has made so much of the mortal live for ever,) lined the streets—fragile arches, decked with shortlived flowers, spanned the entrances to the town—and flaunting paintings, of which the very mediocrity or badness as works of art, showed the hearty unselfish good-will of the artists or artisans who exhibited them, glowed, blushed, and glistened from every balcony, and from many a humble door, now proud; while one noble inscription—"UNUS SUFFICIT ANTWERPIÆ"—attested the depth and singleness of the local feeling which exuberated in these bright and floral testimonials. Having only seen Antwerp before in such its holiday attire, we felt something like disappointment at first—but hunger and the heat did not allow us to indulge pensive regrets—and when we had toiled to the *Grand Laboureur*, water, rest and breakfast, comprised and satisfied all our craving wishes.

When the last—and not the least—of these wishes had been amply gratified, we were prepared to listen with thanks to the information of the presiding *garçon* that high mass would be celebrated in the cathedral at ten o'clock. The hour had not quite arrived;—and, passing the cathedral, we idly sauntered to the quay, where we had the gratification of seeing our distanced rival, "The Wilberforce," arrive, and of discerning our truant friends on the deck—whom we did not think it necessary to wait for, being now quite sure of meeting them when they should have undergone the custom-house worries which our slender baggage had easily escaped. The music had commenced when we entered the cathedral—a full band was performing in the organ-gallery—but I did not think the figures of the fiddlers, playing away as if for their lives, or the character of the music, so suited to the solemn grandeur of the church as the single organ to which we had before listened. Groups of worshippers were scattered about the vast area, in which mass was performed at four chapels or altars simultaneously,

all engrossed by the most unostentatious and unaffected devotion. I was struck with the appearance and demeanour of the Belgian soldiers with whose uniforms the crowds were speckled. Unlike our soldiers, who would be marched up to church as to parade, stiff and stately, they dropped in one by one, and each stood or knelt, careless of all but the service for the time, as if there were no other service than that of heaven. There is something in the quiet piety, or in the docile thoughtfulness, of a soldier particularly affecting: the contrast between the strictest discipline of personal obedience and the heaven-bent aspirations of the mind; and in the suggestion, how conducive the habit of obedience to human authority is to the culture of submission to the divine. These Belgian soldiers (stunted and awkward fellows compared with our smarter troops, and certainly not looking as if the schoolmaster had been very active in their training) impressed me, in their devotional fervour, with a solidity of character and singleness of heart I could not help respecting. The small lad who attended on the priest at the chief altar, also struck me as a curious specimen of humanity—a living problem it would puzzle Babbage to solve. Very slender—tall for his age, if it were, as I should guess, about thirteen—with a dark, clear, colourless complexion, and eyes fixed, yet not as if intent in thought—meanly yet neatly dressed in a dark frock-coat and open collar—the child walked, and rang his bell, and performed the other ministrations of the sacristan, as if in a dream; or rather as if he had just sense to know where he was and what he had to do, and had no being beyond the limits of the inclosure before the altar. Was he a mere automaton? or was his little heart overborne with the sense of the sacred duties in which he lived? Certainly he was either rapt or stupid. To suppose him ever laughing, or playing with children of his own age, seemed as impossible as to impute a frolic to one of the quaint cherubs carved above the

shrine. Whether endowed with most of earth or heaven, his must be a strange childhood!

When we returned to our inn, we found our friends of the "Wilberforce" progressing towards comfort, and "assisted" (in the French sense of the word only) at their breakfast; —which we regarded with the less envy, as dinner, at the table d'hôte, was announced for the agreeable hour of two. After lounging a little in the wide, white, sultry street, and drinking lemonade outside the door of a *café*, which went down like nectar, we took a coach and drove to the Citadel. It is said to be one of the strongest fortresses in Europe, and it is one of the last which made a gallant resistance, still recollected; but it is a fortress for use, not for show—one which can never tower in the imagination—though it might live there for ever in prose, if Sir Walter had described it. To the eye, scanning it from a slight elevation, it presented nothing but an involution of low grass mounds and dwarf stone walls—half buried—and not in trees, though some stunted limes, bordering the outward works, looked greenly on the noontide heat, and seemed to defy the sun, like the kindred fortress they fringe. I was not sorry when I found that we could not be admitted beyond the outer court, being unprovided with an order from the proper authority. I had the idea of the place vividly enough—and the details of any mere show are to me intolerable. So we drove home, and lingered about till dinner-time—which we did not find too early. And a happy time it was!—Our three small parties now all joined in one—all fairly launched on the holiday stream—not perhaps disposed to enjoy the hour with less keenness because that stream was soon to divide, and we were to seek happiness by diverse channels. "We were seven"—four lawyers let loose from the same circuit—two ladies, sharing, as wife and daughter respectively, in all the pleasures of two of them—and my own Eton stripling; and

a merrier party never startled the "dull cold ears" of Belgic *garçons* or German philosophers. During a long and excellent dinner—combining Continental variety with English cleanliness—we steered, not indeed "from grave to gay," but from red wine to white, and then back again from white to red, "for change delectable, not need"—leaving our young gentleman master of the ceremonies, as monopolising, in truth, all the sedateness of the party. He had not escaped from cares so black as ours, and was therefore more discreetly joyous than his elders, and now maintained all we had left of character. We lawyers bade a gay defiance not only to mischance, which might soon or might never come, but even to the heat, which was there; and in spite of which we sipped or tossed off our bumpers of light wine, and finished with coffee and the small glasses of brandy—cups which "cheer but not inebriate"—as if we were about to travel through wet and snow. One little circumstance alone fretted the current of my happiness—my passport, taken from me on the quay, had been sent to the wrong hotel; and as our host was obliged to send to all his rivals in the city to discover it, I was not without misgivings that between them and him it would not be found in time to enable me to join my friends in their journey onward by the railway at four o'clock;—so I abused all passports (as I have before, in good set phrases, which I will not repeat) till—just at the last moment—as the outside passengers were crowding the top of the last omnibus—it arrived, and all was charming.

A few broiling minutes brought us to the station. O the white heat of the picture!—If the genius of Heat ever inspired one scene, indicative of all its splendid agencies, surely it was this!—The buildings, all new and dazzling white—the ground below beaten into white dust, which ever and anon floated into motion as the hot wind stirred it—a dried-up stream separating the "station" from a parched nursery-ground bordered by gaudy yellow flowers—and

heaps of smoking lime and dull red bricks in sweltering confusion—to say nothing of the crowd hurrying, driving, and worrying as if they were mad, and exclaiming in strange tongues—all gave a notion of heat so intense, as to supply courage to bear an individual part in the great blaze. It was complete of its kind—a perfect sacrifice to the Caloric Powers—to be borne, and laughed at, and recollected for ever after!

Seated at last in a first-class carriage, and conscious of its rapid motion, I enjoyed the lazy luxury of gazing at scenery which had nothing to excite admiration—scarcely anything to be remembered—but which still possessed a charm I deeply felt and can scarcely analyse. The country bordering the railway between Antwerp and Malines is as flat as a bowling-green—intersected by trenches cut for irrigation, and scantly studded with small clumps of trees, yet it is very pleasing. Perhaps its greenness, contrasted with the sultry heat—as the snow defies the sun in Switzerland—is beloved for its strangeness; and we are grateful for so welcome and unhoped-for a relief. At the station of Malines, where several railways meet, we were detained for half an hour, until joined by the train from Brussels, which I employed, sometimes in wondering at the immovable listlessness of the Belgian soldiers, who lounged at the windows and on the benches fronting them of a barrack opposite, and strolling on to the margin of a lovely meadow, through which a real living stream wound its sunny way.

Unpleasant mistakes sometimes happen at this rendezvous of trains among tourists ignorant of the country language, one of which made me for a quarter of an hour quite unhappy. A smart little page, attendant on an English officer, his lady, and their baby, just as the train was about to start for Liége, was pronounced missing, and could only be accounted for on the supposition that he had been innocently kidnapped by the conductors of the train which had just started for Brussels, and had taken from us, by no

mistake, two of our friends, W —— and his lady. It was a sad thought that contemplated the position of this poor child—trussed up in a tight green jacket, loaded with brass buttons—without a *sou* in his pocket, or a word except English in his mouth—set down in the capital of Belgium —*his own master!* We consoled ourselves at last with the assurance that he would find out, by instinct, our friend W——, and who, in the ever-active friendliness of his nature, would feel positive enjoyment in comforting the involuntary truant, and sending him, ticketed and labelled, to his master. And we were right. As soon as we set foot on the Rhine steam-boat at Cologne we saw the little domestic, with his slender arms filled by the fat, fair, flaxen-headed baby, who laughed at him with her large blue eyes, as if she was as glad as we were of his return.

My son and I suffered too, though in a less degree, from the impetuosity of the railway attendants—for amidst the crowd of travellers who, at the last moment, rushed to the doors of the carriages, we were unable to secure our seats, and were forced, before we were aware, into a second-class carriage, where all classes, from the tenths of humanity downwards, were huddled together on seats without backs, —a mass of moving misery—and thus we were dragged to the station near Liége, in the waning light of evening, enduring as many stoppages as you undergo in a holiday train between Reading and London, which the swiftness of the intervening motion makes infinitely more intolerable than the rests of the stage coaches—now almost no more— were in the olden time. It was long past sunset when we reached the *terminus* of our sufferings,—and most thankful were we to our friend R— and his daughter, who insisted on crowding us with themselves into their open carriage, instead of consigning us to that sad variety of woe, a Belgian omnibus, which was the only asylum of our fellow-sufferers.

The drive from hence to Liége—some two or three miles

—would have been delicious, even if it had not been contrasted with the stifling imprisonment which it followed. There was a solemn strangeness in the scene, which opened in pale moonlight as we descended into the narrow valley which the famed city crowds. As we approached the margin of the broad Meuse, circling the burial-ground of a tall church, the confused ranges of building, tier above tier, occupying the heights above us, stood silent as the tombs before us; and the tall chimneys of the manufactories in the distance, shot into the sky, clad in spectral light as in shrouds. The swarming population was in repose—which seemed as deep as that which awaits the generation in a few years, when the river shall glide by its resting-place. I never felt such stillness in the midst of thousands. On we went through the silent city, till we reached The Black Eagle, beneath whose wings a stirring landlady and sprightly *garçons* gave proof that the world of Liége was not all so sleepy as it seemed. We were soon provided with tea—to which "by my particular desire, and for this night only," were added some cutlets and a bottle of cool *vin ordinaire*; and were quite ready to share the civic repose which, in its depth, had almost startled us.

Next morning I rose at six, and sauntered about the city for a couple of hours. It combines, perhaps, more variety of associated objects than any in Christendom. A busy manufacturing town, a great workshop for arms, it bristles on the one side of a narrow valley, the steeps of which are interlaced with brushwood, and on whose topmost ridge tall trees wave against the deep blue sky—a river, broad yet sylvan, ripples gently through it, and curves away from it beneath green and lofty banks—large fountains, figured with quaint devices, play in its busiest streets—and vestiges of dim antiquity arrest the thought in its meanest alleys. The Hall of Justice, formerly the Palace of the Prince Bishop, built round a quadrangle, supported by ebony pillars of various architecture, looks as Venetian as if Canaletti had painted it,

and touches the mind with the sense of gloomy passion with which tragedy has invested Venice beyond all other cities. An Englishman looks for vestiges of the events of Quentin Durward—and if he looks in vain for answering realities, feels a thrill of honest pride in the creative and consecrating power of his own great novelist. The forms which cluster in the squares are as varied as these associations—the sturdy armourer, the grave soldier, the fantastic student, each has his home in Liége, and finds kindred objects of regard. Nature, however, triumphs over all—she "doth embrace her lawful offspring in man's art;" and her beauty softens, harmonises, and reconciles all, as parts of one extraordinary and miscellaneous but beautiful picture.

As the *diligence* for Aix-la-Chapelle was not to depart till eleven, we enjoyed the luxury of a slow and protracted breakfast, only saddened by the prospect of parting from two more of our friends, who, blessed or cumbered with a carriage, proposed to take the longer road by Verviers, and to stop for the night at Aix, while we were vainly bent on reaching Cologne. On leaving Liége, I caught a glimpse of a play-bill, posted on the wall, conveying the agreeable intelligence to those whom it might concern, that Mons. Bouffé would appear that night at the theatre in his part of "Le Gamin de Paris." Alas! this announcement was nothing to us, except in the pleasant notice that the sturdy citizens of Liége would enjoy the most genial curiosity of modern acting, in the personation of the light-hearted, idle, mischievous, good-natured youth, which this great actor completes to the life, as if he were again fifteen. Crossing the bridge—passing through a dark high archway—our vehicle slowly ascended the bank of the valley opposite to the city, among great trees, beneath whose deep shade the gay uniform of some idle soldiers was sparkling. Up the long winding hill, the *diligence* crawled, and reached at last the flint-paved dusty terrace which runs to the Prussian frontier. While it skirted the narrow valley of Liége, we

looked straight across the deep embedded town, to the trim villas and cottages perched beyond it—knowing it only by the tallest chimney-tops of its manufactories, which rose almost to our level ;—and afterwards, as the country expanded, we gazed on pleasant, rich, unpretending scenery like that of Northamptonshire. Though the prospect was always agreeable, the road itself was odious—for the clumsy vehicle jolted along its stony centre, to be covered from the sides by every breeze with white dust—a deep stream of which lay on each side of the pavement, and would not lie still. In descending a declivity to the frontier, the *diligence* broke down, and we were politely requested to walk on to the Custom-house, where our two small bags were to be taken out of the carriage and replaced, with all the indifference or delicacy of the Prussian Douane. The change from the rumbling motion to a walk was agreeable enough ; —but a reference to the watches induced us to despair of reaching Aix in time for the last train for Cologne, which we had hoped to achieve. Sooner than we expected, the old *diligence*, with its wheel tied on, and its pole bandaged up again, received us, and wound its way to the top of the next height, where the city of Aix, with its chapel dome, like a miniature of St. Paul's, glistened in the evening light. On reaching the place of disembarkation at Aix, we found that our *diligence* had "kept the word of promise to the ear, and broke it to the hope"—true, *it* was in time to meet the train—and if there had been no luggage to be inspected and no passport to be *viséd*, we might, by dint of hard running, have made good our seats ; but we saw directly that the thing was all but impossible ; and being, moreover, parched with heat, white with dust, and hungry for dinner, we reconciled ourselves to necessity, and took our way to the Hotel of the Four Seasons, to rest for the evening. There we rejoined R—— and his fair charge ; dined leisurely and well ; and having nothing further to do but to go to bed, went to it, at the good old schoolboy

hour of nine o'clock, and slept as soundly as ever schoolboy slept who hoped to travel early in the morning.

At five on the morrow morning I was in the street, and making my way to a walk along the old wall, which I had enjoyed two years before, and was desirous to revisit. The morning was delicious—bright, yet still cool, scented with sweets from the little suburban gardens and dwarf hedgerows that beset them—and although the prospect was scarcely more interesting than that which may be enjoyed at the same hour in the suburb of any English country town, it had its own charm for me, in the renewal of the thoughts bred in the only time I had seen it before ; a circumstance which often endears a common scene more than a grand one; the spot having no striking feature to dazzle and perplex the sentiment of the past, or divide the interest with our thoughts. A cup of coffee and a hunch of bread, taken " without prejudice" to our proper breakfast, prepared us for our railway journey, which commenced at seven o'clock and terminated at ten, at the extremity of Cologne. The railway, although not so splendidly appointed as ours, is excellently managed—especially in the arrangements for the care and distribution of the luggage—and runs through a pretty country, the prettiest portion of which consists in a succession of copses, whose green recesses it has cut open. Like the travellers by the Great Western Railway, before Mr. Sydney Smith opened their prison doors, the passengers are locked in ; but their imprisonment is not absolute ; for a key, sealed in a small leather bag, is attached to the door of each carriage, with a printed label in German, French, and English, directing that the seal is only to be broken in case of danger—a promise which would scarcely satisfy the wit which liberated the English captives—as a railway smash would leave little opportunity or power to break the seal and open the door. How long would such a little bag remain in an English carriage, unmolested by the curious or restless fingers of children of small or large growth ?

When we reached the suburbs of Cologne we were disembarked into omnibusses, which were waiting to convey us to the Rhine, and which speedily swallowed us all. A troop of Prussian cavalry happened to be entering the city just before us ;—and, winding through the narrow streets, obliged us to follow at a foot's pace, so we obtained an unwished for insight into the domestic economy of the citizens, whose dingy rooms were brought close to our eyes by the juxtaposition of the side-openings of our omnibus and the windows of parlours or kitchens—" glimpses" which did *not* " make us less forlorn," or envious of the domestic life of the Prussian citizens. At length " the long array" ceased its " toilsome march ;" we stopped on a quay bordering the great river ; and, buoyant in spirits, stepped on board the steam-boat, which soon began to stem the huge current of green water, and bear us triumphantly against it.

CHAPTER II.

JOURNEY FROM COLOGNE TO ZURICH.

Voyage to Coblentz—Glance at North Wales—Two Evening Strolls at Coblentz—Highway of the Rhine—Voyage to Mannheim—Perusal of Carlyle on "Hero Worship"—Thoughts on Carlyle's Theory—Journey to Carlsruhe in search of an Austrian *visé*—Detention at Carlsruhe—Pirate Shops—The Opera—Journey to Schaffhausen—Adventure at Schaffhausen—Evening Visit to the Rhine Fall—Journey to Zurich—A generous Boatman on the Lake of Zurich.

It was ten o'clock by the time our steamer was in motion, and the sun was high in heaven. Its intense power drew up thin white mists from the huge field of living water and the low marshy grounds which bordered it, and veiled the distance which we were piercing,—more fair than any object which they surrounded. As the outline of the Drachenfells gradually became traceable through the mist, I thought that group of lauded hills—against whose range in "the light of common day," I would fearlessly place the line of the Malverns to any eye undazzled by Byron—might better vindicate its poetical glories than when standing out from the serenest evening sky. When we approached them, and the first scenes of the Rhine's glory, a servant of my friend R——, well cognizant of his master's native and beloved Merionethshire, asked me if this was the Rhine, which he had heard was so beautiful? I told him we were not yet in its most striking gorges, but that this was the first great scene of which so much had been written. "Well, Sir," said honest Richard with a smile, "I think we can match it between Dolgelly and Barmouth."—"Indeed you can," was my reply—and surely Richard was right. Let any one who has knowledge of the two scenes, call to memory that glorious estuary—reposing in beauty and crowned with grandeur—look down its

avenue of sparkling water to the distant sea, glistening in the western light,—let him glance on the one side at its curving shore of oak-sprinkled meadows edged and broken by rock, and on the other to the pillared precipices of Cader Idris, and then—with all respect to the noble substance of the flowing Rhine, gaze at its vine-spotted banks, and say if there is the faintest approach to rivalry!

We breakfasted on board, and, therefore, declined joining the table d'hôte at one o'clock, and ordered dinner by ourselves at four. We thought we had great learning and wisdom in our party; but the wisest may fall into error; and so did we. Dinner is a great object in a day on the Rhine, especially in going up the stream, where the scenes are presented in slow succession, and remain long in sight; and though pleasantest of all in the present, is more agreeable in the calm retrospect than in the hungry anticipation. We were quite tired out before our hour arrived; and when it came, though, considering the appliances of the steamboat, it was really a marvellous production, still it had neither the variety, the length, nor the mirth of the popular meal at one. It satisfied us all, however, at last; and we became friends with the Rhine and with mankind. At sunset we reached Coblentz—our place of rest for the night, and, alas! of separating from our friends—and obtained rooms in the Hotel of the Giant. Before I went to rest beneath that great protection, I enjoyed two strolls which I shall not soon forget—one in the waning sunlight, to the junction of the Moselle and the Rhine, alone; the other with W—— by moonlight, to the great Church of the City. The first impressed me with an image of the most majestic peace—the lucid and mighty Moselle, crowned for its *euthanasia* by a bridge of fourteen arches, dividing it into avenues of crystal, half light, half shadow—not meeting, not embracing—but becoming the Rhine in unrippled, unconscious blending—the meeting of the waters staying the current of each, and presenting a smooth, clear, calm

mirror—a glorious embracing of destiny, gentle and perfect, beyond the death-devotion of a Moslem to his Sultan, or a Grecian Hero to his Fate. The second walk, agreeably perplexed by the waterish moonlight, led at last to the portals of the church, with its two lank pepper-box towers rising spectral in the pale sky, among ghost-like clouds. We did not stay till "the dead waist and middle of the night;" but I could not resist the feeling that the silent square before those towers—so lofty, so strange, so uncouth, so cold in the moonshine—was the fitting stage for no less a ghost than the most awful that ever burst its cerements at the call of human genius—the buried majesty of Denmark—to "revisit the glimpses of the moon." I thought if there was a platform, like that fabled of Elsinore, to be found in the world, the multitude, to each of whom Hamlet is a wiser and gentler self, might recognise it here; and almost called my lively friend Horatio.

At this meeting of the waters our party separated in different directions. I had intended to seek Chamouni—Chamouni, so lovingly glanced at, so lightly left last year—but was tempted, by the assurance of W—— that we might reach Italy and twice cross the Alps in our allotted time, to turn traitor to the happiest of mortal or fabled valleys. W—— sketched out for us a route by which we might pierce into Italy by the Splügen, return by the Pass of St. Gothard, and reach our present station at the Giant again within a fortnight—a splendid dream, which we could not resist, and which we substantially realised. One obstacle alone was presented to the accomplishment of this idea—the absence of an Austrian *visé* to my passport. O that an Austrian license should be necessary to enable an Englishman, or any man, to obtain a glimpse of Italy! The necessity for this stupid form, from the most stupid of governments—"the deadly Austrian," as Cobbett well called it when Napoleon sought its alliance and his ruin—compelled us to diverge either to Carlsruhe or Berne; and

as Carlsruhe was yet unvisited by us, and would lead us to Schaffhausen, which was known to us, we chose Carlsruhe for our Austrian penance. Having arranged our course, we took our leave of our friends (who purposed to proceed more leisurely), and slept as lightly as people should do who are bound to start on board an inexorable steam-boat at six in the morning.

A long and lovely day, borrowing something from the night, was sufficient to bear us from Coblentz to Mannheim, by the grandest Highway of the World ;—I say deliberately the grandest, as combining in happiest proportions all the requisites of grandeur—a noble stream, so copious as to suggest no painful notion of the economy of water, like our rural Thames with its locks and commissioners—historic associations which dignify, and romantic fancies which refine every scene—rounded and rocky hills for banks, not so beautiful as those of the Wye, nor clad in such various green, but reflecting their own power on the mighty river by suggesting the obstacles through which its waters, before the birth of empire, forced their triumphant way ; and the little steam-boat, stemming and conquering the glorious torrent in its fulness of strength, and enabling us deliberately to enjoy all, while we are borne on our course to yet lovelier scenes ! Never, surely, was the power of steam—man's magic, derived from his "so potent" (though black) art—employed so gloriously in aiding heaven's magic, as in impelling the steam-boats on the Rhine, whether in their upward or downward course. The triumph is the greatest upward—the mastery achieved over the glacier-fed stream ; while slowly, as the boat ascends, promontory, rock, crag, castle, church (entire or in ruins), is fully developed to the voyager ; but more *delightfully* (after the ascent has been once made, and familiarity acquired with these border grandeurs) when, on the descent, steam adds wings to the current ; harmonises with it ; and, as current and vapour combine to bear the voyager onward, he catches these fleeting

glimpses of hill, ravine, castle, rock, island, and the ever-changing river itself—shifting pictures which will often gleam upon the more solemn stream of his life! If I were asked what condition of humanity is the most delightful and the most suggestive, I think I should answer that enjoyed in a steam-boat on the Middle Rhine—descending, I fear I should say now—for perfect repose, freedom of movement, an absence of sickness and all that is sickening (except German habits), with the sense of rapid progression, the substance and the shadow of life, meet there in happier combination than elsewhere on this "human earth of ours." The dinner, however, is certainly pleasantest on the upward voyage, because, then, there is time for both senses to have their full enjoyment; whereas one does a little grudge the rapid progress of the vessel through the noblest part of the way; where every course, to which due attention is paid, deprives the diner of at least half a dozen castles.

During our passage up the long wastes of water which succeed to the glories of the last gorge, I occupied the serene time in studying one of the books which I had providently (as I now thought) added to my store—Carlyle's Lectures on "Hero Worship" which I had *read* before, but never *perused* till now. My hurried and broken glances at the more abstruse works of this remarkable author, although little qualifying me to judge of the doctrines they teach, were sufficient to inspire me with respect for one who, instead of flattering the vanities of his age, confronts and scorns them; who tears away the pretexts which invest its selfishness with the appearances of philosophy; and who, through the dim mazes of solemn speculation, sends forth startling voices, which compel the unheeding and prosperous to reflect and to mourn. But, beyond this general sense of a nobleness of purpose, and of an impressive power, I had never approached a knowledge of the writer, except in his

history of the French revolution, in which history becomes poetry, at once in its vivid picture and elevated truth. On the silent river, and afterwards on my long journey from Carlsruhe to Schaffhausen, in such serious and unruffled mood as it is entitled to claim, I endeavoured to understand this work; but, while conscious of massive presentations of character, and striking sentiments most forcibly expressed, I could regard its general scope, and its selection of instances, only with an imperfect sympathy. A question sometimes intruded on my admiration of the radiance of its imagery, whether a power of hitherto undiscovered truth was struggling into light amidst the grotesque and tortuous grandeurs of its language, or whether the doctrines were revivals of old thoughts, which, imbedded in a mind of extraordinary wealth, had become embossed and jewelled by its kindred riches; as a piece of common ore, lying for ages among the rocks, may become rough with crystals, and thus grow unwieldly from the beauty which encrusts it; and although no one can doubt the personal sincerity of that mind, and that if, indeed, these are gemmed common-places, they are to its apprehension original truths; still I am compelled to doubt whether in this work any new lesson of wisdom is given to the world. Its text—"That the history of the world is the biography of its greatest men"—was not only enunciated, but acted upon, in the scheme of the Encylopædia Metropolitana, which proposed in this manner to treat all history, supplying the fissures of its biographies by general chapters. That the position is, to a certain extent, true, cannot be denied; but I doubt whether Mr. Carlyle's mode of illustrating it—his attempt to break up the long bas-relief of history, and cast it anew into a series of groups, each encircling some one colossal figure; to substitute for the world's epic a series of tragedies; proves anything but the power of the genius that makes it. That genius is essentially dramatic, but monodramatic—delighting in the vivid presentment of one great nature in action and suffering—

lavishing upon it all the touches of affection, and the colours of fancy, till it becomes an idol; and then bowing down before it as the spirit of its time; and thus sacrificing the universal to the individual, or bidding the universal speak through the individual only. To exercise and enjoy this power, with which Mr. Carlyle is gifted far beyond all modern prose writers, seems to me the aim, though unrevealed to his own consciousness, of this heroic theory; so that, when he thinks he is presenting some image of individual might to the world, as influencing its millions and its ages, he is only dazzled and delighted by the moral majesty and grace of his own creation.

Of this error, the very first of his heroic pictures affords the most striking example. The "Hero as Divinity" is represented by Odin, the chief god of the Scandinavian philosophy; and a most impressive representation of the spirit of stern, dark, northern religion is given—but how? By the biography of the central hero? No; the hero is a mere name; but around this name Mr. Carlyle has drawn, with more than a magician's power, the broad shadows cast *on* human life, and *from* human life, in the old dim times to which he conducts us, and has made to himself a Hero Divinity out of a world of dreams. There he is *altogether* the creator of his own idol—fashioning him out of the very general materials which he rejects as dead, unless inspired by the heroic life of personal greatness—exemplifying if anything beyond his own power, the converse of his favourite theory. And if, as he descends into realties, he succeeds as presenting in their own might, great men as Shakspeare and Luther—whose influences even *his* worship can scarcely overrate—he still sometimes selects his heroes with mere caprice, and clothes them with attributes which have slender suggestions in verity. Take his Mahomet for example,—from what slight hints in genuine biography does he invest the Prophet of Mecca with the charm of individual interest; his journeys through the Desert to the Fairs of Syria; the vein

on his brow, that swelled up when he was in anger, like the horse-shoe vein in Redgauntlet—his telling his young wife Ayesha that he did not love his first wife less than her, though she was old, and a widow, because "she believed in him when none else would believe." Out of such slight hints does Mr. Carlyle draw his "deep-hearted Son of the Wilderness, with his beaming black eyes and open, social, deep soul;" first imagines a character of deep sincerity and of wild grandeur, and then finds it expanding through the religion which his hero created.

When we descend to his "Hero Men of Letters," they are yet more capriciously chosen. Rousseau, whose distempered sensibility set the torch to the pillared rottenness of the world; Burns, who should have been a hero-poet, if hero at all, and to reach whom even Milton is passed by; and Johnson, placed as the intellectual representative of an age which, however superficial and barren, had its Burke and its Goldsmith. One of the traits which is especially noted, as showing the greatness of Johnson's mind, is characteristic of the feeling which Mr. Carlyle delights to find and to magnify. "One remembers always," says he, "that story of the shoes at Oxford; the rough seamy-faced, raw-boned College Servitor stalking about, in winter season, with his shoes worn out; how the charitable Gentleman Commoner secretly placed a new pair at his door; and the raw-boned Servitor looking at them near with his dim eyes, with what thoughts—pitches them out of the window! Wet feet, mire, frost, hunger, what you will; but we cannot stand beggary! Rude stubborn self, help me; a whole world of squalor, rudeness, confused misery and want, yet of nobleness and manfulness withal. It is a type of the man's life this pitching away of the shoes. An original man; not a second-hand living man. Let us stand on our own basis at any rate! On such shoes as we ourselves can get. On frost and mud if you will, but honestly on that—on the reality and substance which Nature gives us, not the sem-

blance, or the thing she has given another through us." Surely there is nothing of the true heroic in this incident, however much there may be of a painful severity of character which was afterwards corrected by better and higher thoughts! The poor Servitor ought to have perceived in the action of his admirer, a reverence for his intellect, a sympathy with his wants, and a desire, clumsily manifested perhaps, to respect even the very waywardness of poverty in the manner of his gift, which Johnson ought not to have coarsely repudiated, but have felt as it was intended. Surely, by this act, instead of showing how little worthy of regard the external appearance was compared with the inward worth, he magnified it into false importance by treating the attempt silently to redress it as an insult! Surely, the independence which thus rejects the aid of a secret friend is not that which Man in this world has a right to cultivate by steeling his heart against the kindness of his fellows! There are passages of true goodness in the life of Johnson sufficient to redeem a thousand such ebullitions of sullen ill-humour; but surely with all the industry which conquered libraries, all the tyranny of conversation, the genial peculiarities, and the ponderous moralities of his style, the image of Johnson must be steeped in the genius of Carlyle, before it can be presented as denoting the intellect and influencing the mind of his age!

But, see, the Rhine is monotonous no longer; for its fields of water, which were all one green in the daylight, are shivered by the deepening lights of evening into various compartments—now golden—now saffron—now violet—now slate colour—vast, smooth slices of coloured crystal—till the last quiver of sunlight is gone, and only a huge, dark, silver plate stretches beneath the leaden sky. Four hours of dark voyaging—slowly labouring up the huge stream, with the apprehension of being fixed in some shallow for our

sole excitement—were endured before we discerned the lights of Mannheim far a-head, and almost another hour before we reached them ;—rather a weary closing up of a delightful day. But what is it now ? while all the beauty of the daylight hours unfolds itself in long array to the memory, this vacant time is but a dark cloud, a speck on retrospect. Happy constitution of our nature, which, in proportion as seasons are dull and listless, bids them shrivel them up in the review, while all the vivid happiness of the past ever starts out and brightens in reflection ! We forgot all, indeed, as soon as we had disentangled ourselves from the busy crowd of our fellow-voyagers on the bank, all worrying and waiting in the dark for their packages, while we, each bag in hand, ran to the good Hôtel de l'Europe, secured our beds, and were calmly seated in its comfortable saloon over our tea and a plump little partridge, before the last loiterer joined us. The only alloy to our comfort was the information which the most active of the *garçons* gave us, that we must rise at four, in order to occupy the *diligence*, (a name more fitly applied to the early times than to the size or movement of this plethoric conveyance), so I retired to such rest as people who seek bed at twelve to leave it at four can enjoy in this workday or holiday world.

At four, or rather earlier, we were preparing for departure. The morning was delicious, the eastern sky casting the softest pink on the distance of the river, which made it, flowing between banks almost level with its stream, instead of a dreary waste of water, look like an enchanted lake poured from the skies. I was startled to meet on the great staircase the same *garçon* who had attended us and fifty others after twelve last night, and then had to assist in making out bills, and to do fifty other things—a youth not apparently of more than twenty years of age—dressed for his day's work, in his light jacket and trousers jerked up by a single loop—clothes which Mr. Moses would disdain to sell at any price, but worn with a sort of conscious smart-

ness ; alert and merry, as if beginning a holiday—endowed with the best manners, those of an obliging nature, and speaking English far better than many a British speaker of fame. These young fellows in hotel or steam-boat are the objects of my wonder ; far better educated and better bred than our waiters, they seem to have no rest night or day ; and yet their good spirits and good humour never fail ; pleasant problems not the less agreeable because we need not solve them. I did not stop to attempt it now ; but, thanking this pleasant specimen of the class for the interest he took, or seemed to take, in our welfare, I bent my way through the silent and fragrant garden which blooms between the hotel and the city, and was soon seated with my yet dreaming son in a large, lumbering, comfortable *diligence*, which having all to ourselves we thoroughly enjoyed. It rolled through level country, sometimes through dark woods of pine trees, and sometimes over sunlit meadows ; and at ten o'clock deposited us at a good hotel in Carlsruhe ; where we had been told we might obtain the Austrian *visé* to our passport and proceed almost directly by diligence to Schaffhausen.

Alas ! for human nature ! even its ingenuous *garçons* do not always tell the exact truth—let us hope because they do not always know it. True it was that the *diligence* from Schaffhausen did start at the convenient hour of half-past eleven, affording time for all we wished to eat or to see in the capital of Baden ; but the Austrian *visé* was not to be obtained at so improper an hour for the labour of affixing a signature, as it seems every hour in the day is after nine o'clock in the morning. What ! ask the Austrian Consul after nine o'clock to write his name ! the thing was monstrous, and worse, if our landlord was " in aught to be believed," impossible ! Would no prayers move him—no small *douceur* to his secretary or servant avail ? It was out of the question ; we must remain till to-morrow ; and even then it was not certain that the great functionary might deign to release us ; and this absurd piece of vexa-

tion seemed to those who announced it to be quite proper. This is no doubt the reason why such absurdities last. Probably the Austrian Consul is a good-natured man, and it is unlikely he should be so ill-natured as to refuse a minute's attention, even in the heat of day, to give twenty-four hours' freedom to a holiday traveller, if it depended usually on his volition. But the petty tyranny had hardened into custom ; it had grown familiar to him and to others as an established regulation ; in a few years such custom becomes unquestionable ; and men practise the small cruelty without remorse, and would themselves submit to it without a murmur. I, however, though thus trying to extenuate or explain the consular impenetrability, did not quite find comfort in my philosophy ; but murmured a good deal ; until the assurance that all murmuring was in vain induced me to make the best of our situation ; so we selected an airy chamber, and, instead of breakfasting, awaited the *table d'hôte* dinner, which was fixed at the reasonable hour of half-past twelve. This repast, which was very good after the German fashion, and the information that there would be an Opera performed at six o'clock, restored us to perfect good humour, and enabled us, even amidst the white heat of a cloudless afternoon, to stroll through the streets of the city. It is prettily planned, the streets diverging in a fan-like fashion from the Palace, where it is said the Margrave Charles took up his rest and attracted to him a city ; which, however, is not a city of palaces, but of very mean buildings ;—private houses in which the citizens must lead the dullest of lives ;—and shops which offer little temptation to a purchaser. The bookseller's in the principal square is an exception ; for it is a very showy and tempting shop indeed, bright with prints of all the grandeurs of the Rhine, and rich in English piracies. There the last new novel, which has scarcely reached our distant watering-places, may be bought for about the price at which you would hire its three volumes for three days in London ;

the very last of Mr. James may be had in two or three sizes, at prices descending so low as to remind one of the story of the Bottle Imp, whose unhappy possessor could only get rid of his fatal treasure by underselling the price which he gave. I bought Sir Edward Bulwer's Zanoni for three francs, and Sir Edward Head's "Bubbles from the Brunnens of Nassau" for a franc and a half, not to bring home, but to read and scatter to the winds, after appeasing my conscience for thus encouraging the vender, by remonstrating with him against the *morale* of his trade. "O, Sir," he replied, "these authors ought to thank us, instead of complaining; if we had not their works at our own price we should never trouble ourselves about them, and they would have no reputation out of their own country." This might be true; still it seemed to me hard that our authors must thus have greatness thrust upon them, and achieve European fame only through European plunder.

After lounging through the sultry streets, cheered only by the bright green of the orange-trees, which are formed into fairy avenues about the Palace, we found our way to the Opera, performed in an excellent theatre of semicircular shape, and enjoyed it heartily. If it had been bad, it had still been welcome; for to travellers amidst great or strange scenes, the acted drama is always delightful, shedding a luxurious perfume on the rusticity of nature, and peopling the solitude of the heart with those images of action and suffering that belong to all countries and all times; like the caravan with which Thomson blesses Siberian wastes, "from rich Cathay with news of humankind." It was, however, very good; for though there was no great name in the bills, and no predominant excellence in any one of the performers, all seemed in earnest; to love their art and not to dislike their parts; and acted and sung with all their hearts. The Opera was Mozart's *Titus*, which I had never seen before, and with the story of which I was unacquainted, and which I did not unravel; but there were

striking situations ; danger and death besetting a graceful youth, and love more powerful than both to aid him ; and I was satisfied to enjoy without solving the tragic puzzle. Like poor Desdemona, " I understood a fury in the words, but not the words." There was a long pause between the acts, during which almost all the pittites left their benches for the open air, and such of the occupiers of the boxes as remained took ice or tea. We, being made appropriately thirsty by our sultry rambles after dinner, took both ; and as the tea was of fine flavour, and the ice served in hugely-piled glasses, were signally refreshed and exhilarated. As there was nothing but the Opera, we reached our hotel before ten o'clock, and went to bed in a sort of trembling hope that the Austrian Consul would deign to sign our passport before the world's breakfast next morning.

We rose at six, and walked out to Biorden, a mile and a half from the town, to procure baths, which we found in a strange-looking building of white-washed wood-work, in the midst of a neglected orchard ; the accommodation coarse, and the attendance not polite. The road lay along a level dusty road, bordered by stagnant ditches, and here and there shaded by a dismal-looking tree, but was rendered interesting by the faint outline of the hills of the Black Forest, which bounded the distant horizon. We returned to breakfast ; and after some idle fussing and fuming on our parts, and some equivocal statements on that of the landlord, which suggested to my vanity the possibility of his having imbibed an inconvenient love for our company, the passport appeared, with the awful *visé* of the Austrian Consul. At half-past eleven we were seated in a roomy *diligence*, in the darkness of an inn-yard, awaiting the horses which should bear us onward towards Switzerland.

The journey stretched for many miles along the roots of broad hills, an opening of which showed me that we were on the way to Baden, as reminiscence after reminiscence of the way thither dawned upon me—not without awakening a

busy fear lest we were seated in the wrong carriage, and had taken a short stage instead of a long one. But soon we crossed the road which winds into the recess in which Baden is embosomed, and kept on our course beneath the clustered hills on the left, while to the right a vast flat opened, only diversified by the dim poplars which pointed the course of the scarcely more level Rhine—and yet not so —for see! the well-known spire of Strasburg Cathedral shoots into the sky from its broad platform, (O that modern piety were strong enough to raise its contemplated sister!) and blesses the region. The great cultivated prairie is dull no longer! This angel of the scene consecrates all; gives to the meanest hedgerows of the plain a beauty; lends to flattest field-walks, uncheered by a hillock, a heavenward object; suggesting, as better than mountain solitudes, the fields in which Isaac went out at eventide to meditate; the abode of Abraham in the plain of Mamre; or the corn-fields in which a Greater than Abraham taught His disciples. Traversing this plain (unblessed no longer), we reached Offenburg about six o'clock, happy, but hungry, for we had not breakfasted with a view to so long a fast, and had hoped for a refreshing stoppage of the untiring *diligence* in vain. An English traveller, especially if accompanied by a youth of fifteen, should beware of trusting for refreshment to the habits of a German *diligence* or *eilwagen;* for though when the carriage *does* stop, it allows ample leisure for the repast, as befits so serious a matter, it often goes on stage after stage, a summer's day, as if the stomachs of its occupiers were as insensible as its own. There was no provision made for travellers even here, but we achieved two of those round, thin, Continental beefsteaks, which I prefer to the half raw pride of Dolly's, and a bottle of dry white wine, like *Grave*, and were satisfied. From this place, the way of our *diligence* lay along the same track which had conducted me to Switzerland two years before, on the first run we made from Strasburg to Schaffhausen, up the valley of the Kenzig to

the table-land of the Black Forest, and then descending by Donaueschingen into Switzerland—and as evening drew on, I gave to each change of beauty a shadowy welcome. The poor Kenzig was, indeed, almost dead with heat; a streak of stones, unrefreshed even by a trickle of water, often denoting the skeleton of the river; but the bordering trees and hills nodded in upon my repose with faint reminiscences of the past, and, as curiosity had been once gratified by a daylight journey, they variegated without disturbing my peace. We were alone in the large carriage; my companion slept in body; I slept in spirit, enjoying a long luxurious waking dream of beauty. As the twilight faded, a harvest moon of remarkable splendour, was seen resting its great circle on the hill, and softly changed the aspect of the upward valley to a visionary loveliness; and as morning broke on the mountain-plain, which stretches round the old fortified town of Villingen, and in which the Neckar and the Danube have their sources, the fleecy mists exhaled from this birthplace of rivers supplied a new softness to common objects; and broke away from the scanty clumps of trees, which looked like the island foliage of a lake; and even when melting into air, overarched the streams with magic bridges. At Donaueschingen we were fairly wakened up from sleeping or waking dream by the real stoppage of the *diligence* at the Falcon, where we had enjoyed the very best of actual or possible breakfasts on our first visit to Schaffhausen, after sleeping at Villingen; and where now a coarser repast of bread and coffee awaited us. It was welcome, however, and allowed time for me to renew my acquaintance with the fountain which aspires to be regarded as the source of the Danube, and gives its name to the town.

Its seat, if a usurper's throne, is a gay one; for beside the garden of the vacant palace of the small Prince of Fustenburg, a bright spot of orange trees and flower-beds, all the more luxuriant for being somewhat neglected, it bubbles up into a deep marble basin, whence its waters are

(or should be) conducted through a long culvert, beneath the bright flower-beds, into a rill which runs on the further side of the garden, and which hence enjoys the great name of Danube. This copious spring—or perhaps cluster of springs—as the bubbles rise from opposite sides of the basin, no doubt contributes, in good times, largely to the infant river; but at this season, if it really had been the source of the Danube, the Danube had no right to be; for the waters of the source not reaching by a foot the orifice of the subterranean channel which should conduct them onward, did not, by the contribution of a drop, justify their title. We were very glad, however, to see this fairy-decked spot again; and afterwards, walking up the long hill which stretches from the town to a lofty fir-crowned and cross-honoured point, where Swiss mountains, and the water of the Lake of Constance are visible, to renew our acquaintance with the undulating meadow, over which a covering of the richest grass, enamelled with the brightest Swiss flowers, floats. It was *shotted* (like wavy silk) with the pale violet crocus, which, at this season, grows so plentifully in the Swiss meadows, and which two years ago gleamed a new wild-flower to us, when ascending the same long hill which leads out of Germany into Switzerland. As I gazed at one of these flowers, which I had thoughtlessly plucked, the kindred moment of two years ago flashed on me, when I formed my acquaintance with its faded fellow; the moment—but what a populous chasm between—what nervous apprehensions; what feverish labours; what vain regrets; what glimmerings of happiness,—all the blissful hours of last year's holiday, first in Germany and Switzerland, and afterwards in Monmouthshire and Wales: how vast a section of life—how full of materials for reflection and thankfulness: how long!—Except, as compared with that which is to come, I cannot call our human life *short:* to me it seems huge, vast, immeasurable; and surely it is only the strong, undying,

universal consciousness of an eternal destiny, that makes us think of this as brief!

Cherishing such sad, sweet musings, I walked on to the fir-clad summit. The famous prospect from the crowning cross lay wrapped in the fleecy mist which the sun drew up; but as the road descended, winding along the edge of a ravine, dark with luxuriant vegetation on its right, the three thunder-splintered mountains on the Constance road crouched on the left, at the extremity of the plain. Turning downwards into the valley of the rural Rhine, the road passes the Swiss Custom-house, where a short ceremony of baggage-tumbling, to what end I cannot guess, was inflicted; and then it wound through a narrow, gentle valley, a closely shaven lawn, interspersed with rocks, looking like some lovely English pleasure ground, enriched with ruins. This sort of genteel greenness lasted till the old fantastic gate of Schaffhausen received us; and we soon quitted our carriage at the Crown Hotel, kept by a courteous host, who spoke English well, and told us that he had learned it when at school at Uxbridge.

The day was intensely hot; but airy and shaded chambers, reached by crossing the roof of part of the house, only admitted the heat as an excuse for a pleasing languor. We dined at the *table d'hôte* at half-past twelve—an hour which our early and coarse breakfast rendered agreeable—and returned to the lazy luxury of our pavilions (such they seemed) intending to reserve a visit to the cataract of the Rhine till the heat of the day should be spent. I fancied, however, that I could find a nearer cut through the woods than by the road or the river for our future guidance; and announcing to my companion that I should only be absent for an hour, quitted my asylum on this wise errand. Having crossed the bridge, and toiled up the right-hand hill, overlooking the river and the town, I saw—not a way to the Fall, but a combination of colours so brilliant,

that I think even Italy could not surpass it. The rushing river, of the deepest and the brightest blue, was broken at its sides, by natural and artificial weirs, into streaks and eddies of foam, white as snow-wreaths; the opposite meadows, just without the grey town walls, were carpeted with green and yellow; the shelving woods, steeply slanting to the river, wore the richest varieties of green; and, as if to brighten the picture yet more intensely, some lads, who were bathing in a small bay, just out of the stream, had flung their holiday jackets, yellow, scarlet, blue, and crimson, on a shelving grass bank, on which these bits of cloth sparkled like jewels. After gazing for awhile at these remarkable accidents of colour, until I was almost dazzled, I entered the wood, then emerged into vineyards, and walked briskly forward among thin, dwarf, dusty plants, hoping, by the slanting direction of the path, to cut across the bend of the river, and arrive speedily within sight of the Fall. Vain hope! After walking briskly for a quarter of an hour, perhaps blinded by the splendours my eyes had devoured, I found myself in the midst of a vineyard, penetrated by many little pathways; neither river nor road was in sight; but firm in the belief that the road was above me, in which I must have been mistaken, I turned, as I supposed, towards it. Spying a path in the wood I had quitted, which seemed to slant upwards, and thinking it might lead me back into the highway, I struck into it, and went on, rejoicing in its thick boughs, which, matted into a thick roof over my head, shut out the intolerable sun. On, on I wandered, till, to my confusion, the path ended in a small circle, whence the trees had been cleared, and I had no choice but to retrace my steps or plunge onwards into the thicket. Still assured that the road must be above me, I chose the braver, not the wiser course; and trampling down the dead leaves of many autumns, I continued to ascend the hill with hurried steps. Opening there was none; the thick shade above prevented me from seeing the

sun, which now I invoked as a guide; till, at last, a suspicion rushed on me that I must have crossed the road unperceived, and broken into the woods above it, which extend for miles along the hills. Wherever the wood might be, the position of the Rhine was certain; it *must* be at the bottom of the hill; and *there* I resolved to seek it, in spite of all obstacles. Downward I now ran, crying out, at first in sportive fantasy of terror, as imagining myself lost in the midst of an American forest; but soon, as I became exhausted, and the steepness of the declivity along which I continued to run increased, I cried out *almost* in real dismay. Kneedeep in dead leaves, which alone strewed the ground, for happily there was neither grass nor underwood which might conceal serpentine horrors—I still held on my way, till at last I broke into light in a strongly hedged upland meadow; I dashed across this forbidden ground, heedless of the call of an old farmer, who was smoking at a cottage door, and fortunately too fat to follow me, and reached the high-road—not the road I had so thoughtlessly quitted, but the road to Constance, nearly two miles above the bridge—that is, in the opposite direction from the Fall. The way back, was weary enough, but it was plain before me. I traversed it as fast as I could, and, scratched, and torn, and covered with dirt and leaves, reached my cool chamber. A small glass of cognac, "tired nature's sweet restorer," revived me, and "a little water cleared me of the deed;" but I learned a lesson, which the adventures of Christian and Faithful, in the Pilgrim's Progress, might have taught me, not to leave the high road for a path which I do not know, however assured I may feel that it will lead to my resting-place.

In the evening we visited the Fall, in the carriage of a very kind-natured old English gentleman, who had heard of my adventure from my son, and would not allow me to walk again. It had disappointed me two years before, when we had come from Strasburg to see it, the ultimate object of

our tour ; but *now* I felt my injustice. The lowness of the Fall, compared with the breadth of the stream, and the interruption of the stream by rocks, not only in its width, but in passages of its downward course, tend to disappoint the spectator who has figured to himself an immense body of water precipitated over a lofty rock in one flood ; but when this Fall is *studied*, it will be found worthy the mingled sense of purity and power which the idea of a great cataract involves. Our British waterfall scenes are lovely chasms, with a rivulet dashing into them, or dribbling down them ; with the exception of the Clyde Falls, in which alone the power of water predominates ; and even with them, the exquisite accompaniments divide admiration with the water. But in the Rhine Fall, the water is all in all ; the senses become filled with its majesty, till it swallows up all other impressions, and you have no eye but for its ever-flashing spray ; no ear but for its never-pausing thunder.

Next day (22nd August) we went by *diligence* to Zurich, passing within sound of the mighty Fall, through a smiling, almost laughing country, so gay and bright were the fields, but not generally romantic. To this radiant tameness there was, however, one exception at the small turn of Eglisau, where, after turning up a steep ascent, between old, dark, tottering houses, the Rhine, like a river in a dream, flashed by us in furious effulgence of blue, confined within a narrow channel by high-wooded banks ; we passed it by a covered bridge, the openings of which allowed us a general glance of the flushed and flurried beauty : and then it was gone. At Zurich we fortunately accepted the poet's invitation—"*Will you come to the Bower?*"—and reached the magnificent hotel of that name in time for the five o'clock *table d'hôte*, where dinner was splendidly served. The waiters of this great establishment (I call them waiters because the formal discipline of the house represses the agreeableness of the *garçon* nature) stand in files, and pass the dishes from hand to hand till they are safely placed on the table, to be

looked at and removed for distribution, like the snow-fall in Burns—"a moment bright, then gone for ever." The rank and position of each of these living automatons are indicated by the number of buttons on his coat sleeve—a mode of decoration, perhaps, adopted from the example of some of the Swiss public schools, where scholars take rank according to the number of little yellow stars on the small tails of their jackets. Here we found the considerate friend with whom we visited the Rhine Fall, who, when our dinner and a bottle of very good red wine, selected from the *carte*, for its odd name of *Contis*, were finished, accompanied us to the Lake, at the head of which Zurich stands, and which gives to this manufacturing, reforming, diet-holding, educating city, all it has (for me) of charm. Its shores, which you see before you on each side, till they are confused in extreme distance, are only gay undulating banks, besprinkled with villages and villas, manufactories, mills, and churches, chiefly white, with scarce a hint of Alpine grandeur; its colour is a fainter blue than that of the Lake of Geneva, but harmonising well with the smiling character of its tamer banks; so that in early morning, when they are tinged with a bluish light, and the clear sky is pale above, it seems as if Nature were opening a great laughing blue eye upon the spectator. Two rows of bathing-houses—one set being devoted to the ladies—occupy part of its frontage; and we were informed that the ladies of Zurich, who may well be tempted by the pellucid beauty of the water to trust their veiled charms to its depth, do not neglect the opportunity; but that some of them are excellent swimmers. That, however, is morning amusement; at this time the shore was occupied by boats, into several of which the gestures of watermen invited us to enter. We answered the beck of a very graceful waterman—such we deemed him—a fair-haired youth, whose slight dress, though neat as a stage waterman's might be in Tom Tug, was not such as to repel the natural presumption that he was plying for hire. He

asked us in very agreeable English whither he should row us; recommended several points, which we thought too distant; and after rowing us for an hour, seemed disappointed on our proposing to land. We learnt from him that he was a German by birth; that his occupation in the day was that of a clerk in the Bank at Zurich; that he kept his boat for his evening leisure; and was very happy when he met with any English with whom he could talk, and so exercise himself in a language he was very desirous of acquiring, and which he already spoke very well. These statements embarrassed us very much—as we had taken him for a common boatman—and, after a whispered conference with me, our friend, as we were parting, pressed on him some silver "for a bottle of wine to drink the health of Prince Albert," about whose character and habits he had been pleasantly inquisitive. He did not seem angry at the offer, but decidedly refused it, assuring us that he was more than repaid by the pleasure and advantage of conversing in English with Englishmen, and offered us a longer excursion if we would favour him with our company the next evening. I could not do that; but I gave him my card and address, with a hearty invitation to renew the acquaintance if he should visit London, which seemed to be the climax of his wishes, and not entirely beyond his hopes. I should be heartily glad to see him there, and show him some of the places he liked to hear of; for he better answered my notion of what Jeremy Taylor describes as "a fair young German gentleman," than any I have seen in or out of the German Universities.

On our return to the "Bower" a pleasant surprise awaited us—I found an old friend, once the companion of my circuit festivities, and the depository of my circuit anxieties, who had been many years absent in Bengal, where he had filled the highest judicial office with the highest honour—Sir Edward Ryan—who was returning from Geneva, where some of his family had resided during

part of his absence, and was now lingering with them here. We walked about Zurich together; talking more of old times and old friends than of the new scenes around us; but parted too soon, as he, expatiating in well-earned leisure, intended to rest at Zurich, while I was obliged to rise at daybreak to prepare for my hurried dip into Italy.

CHAPTER III.

JOURNEY FROM ZURICH, ACROSS THE SPLUGEN TO CHIAVENNA

Journey from Zurich to Coire by the Lakes of Zurich and Wallenstadt—First Perusal of Tennyson's Poems—Lake of Wallenstadt—Reichenau—The Valley of Domleschg—Thusis—The *Via Mala*—Hotel and ruined Burgh at Splugen—Passage of the Splugen to Campo Dolcino—Chiavenna—The Buried Town—View from the Hotel at Chiavenna.

TUESDAY, 23d August, was to me the longest day in the year; for after gazing on Lake Zurich from the top of the Bower; and frightening myself about my passport and bill, lest I should not be released in time for the steam-boat; and pretending to eat that bread-and-butter meal which all these very fine Swiss hotels regard as a breakfast, while to my Anglo-Scottish taste it is only a penance redolent of boarding-school, I threaded the Lake of Zurich, the Lake of Wallenstadt, and divers long ways by land, which ended at night in the queer little old town of Coire—a Roman town, which looks not ruined or wasted, but actually *shrivelled* by time. It was a long day; but after we were fairly on board the steamer, almost as happy as long. At eight o'clock we embarked on our first great lake, and then my happiness began; for I forthwith dived to the bottom of my bag, and eviscerated the first volume of Tennyson's Poems, which, strange to confess, I had never read before, having been deterred by a most villanous prejudice, adopted from some "false, fleeting" criticism, which represented them as replete with poetic power, but wild, irregular, and affected; which I translated into meaning—something you are bound to admire and compelled to dislike. I was, therefore, no less astonished than delighted with the passionate beauty, the intensity of generous pathos, the feli-

citous expression of a weight of human experience in few words,—which, while they charmed, smote me with remorse for my long neglect of a great, original, deep-hearted poet. And yet it seemed almost impossible to believe that some of the poems were new to me. With so singular a felicity did they touch on some chords of feeling and memory, that they seemed old but strangely-forgotten things —strains heard in remote boyhood—voices breathed with mighty but homely power, from the depths of years. It seemed to me, as I read, as if I knew what was coming next, as our real life sometimes seems to break on the fragments of a reviving dream,—yet how far beyond all my poor conceptions was the grace and glory with which fragments of my own being seemed invested!

During the deep quiet of our four hours' voyage, I made intimate acquaintance with much of this hearted beauty—hours never to be forgotten. Indeed I was so enrapt in the enjoyment of my possession, as to pass the bridge of Rapperschwyl, said to be the longest in the world, without heeding it—a misfortune which, as the bridge consists merely of loose planks laid on piers, erected in a shallow neck of the lake, is not deeply to be mourned over. At the extremity of the lake, which we reached soon after twelve, we were conducted to a rude inn, where, in a long low room, we found a deal table spread for dinner—not unwelcome after the shadowy breakfast of the Bower, which had not even pretended to approach the rational by the specious sophism of an egg. Though the table-cloth was marvellously coarse, and the plates were not of Wedgewood's Etrurian manufacture, the dinner was wholesome, plentiful, and cleanly served, and the pale *vin ordinaire* particularly bright and pleasant; and this, unlike the furtive coach-dinners in England, had time to be eaten; for dinner, in these parts, is always treated with due respect. When it was over, such of the passengers as, like ourselves, were booked all the way to Coire, were packed in an omnibus—that most

abominable barbarism of modern times—as if the ordinary jolting of humanity over Alpine roads were not bad enough, without being packed sideways; or as if the sufferings of poor hack-horses required exaggeration! In this conveyance we were dragged across the vale of the Linth, a track said to have been redeemed from the water by some engineer, whose name, being preserved on a tablet by the road-side, need not be chronicled among these frail memorials, and for whose work I am not in the mood to be grateful. At first we had glimpses of romantic country, through the loop-holes on the opposite side of the carriage; but soon two enormous friars entered, and shut out all light and hope from us. They were clad in brown serge, unstockinged, with real cords for girdles, the ends of which, hanging down to their feet, suggested the notion of the tremendous penance either might inflict by applying it with his Vulcanian arm to a crouching penitent; but they looked too good-natured to make any such application of their superfluous rope, either to the backs of others or themselves. At last we reached Wesen, and were released on the margin of the lake of Wallenstadt, where we changed our prison for the smallest and prettiest of steamers, on the deck of which we enjoyed a cool bottle of good Rhenish St. George, and the moving panorama of one of the most perfect of lakes. If, indeed, I were bound to select one lake above all others, preserving the attributes of its order, and possessing them in the greatest perfection, I should prefer this to all others I have seen. Lakes which stretch out through a variety of regions, like Lake Leman, Loch Lomond, or Windermere; or that branch in different directions, as the Lake of the Four Cantons, are not capable of being regarded as single objects, and are more like the swollen reaches of great rivers, or bits of inland sea, than lakes, which, to obtain a clear position in the memory, should have a definiteness of outline and singleness of character. Such the lake of Wallenstadt has; for though ten miles in length, it lies in the lap of

such huge mountains—one of them towering into the region of snow, and catching there wreaths of snow for its pinnacles, through the tallest of which is pierced a cavity which discloses the deep blue beyond, like a giant's eye—that it claims kindred with those small Welsh lakes which lie directly embosomed in their own mountains, of which Cwm Bwchwn is the most perfect example. The great granite rocks—of which seven are called the Seven Electors—stand out into the black water, at its north-eastern side, while its one Alp rises from the brink and fills the north; and though on the western side fair pastures slope from the rocks to the water, and deep-green bushes fringe its edges, these smaller beauties are so insignificant in the comparison with the heights above and around them, that they scarcely detract from the severity of the impression. Too soon we reached the opposite shore, where an old lumbering *diligence*—welcome as a contrast to the neat-built omnibus as an old corrupt government is to a republican tyranny—appeared to receive us; and a scramble for places ensued, in which we achieved the highest, if not the best—the *banquette;* while the huge body of the vehicle groaned with a mass of travellers. I do not know whose state was the most gracious, for ours was visited by a tremendous thunder-storm; and though, by lying back in our lofty nook, and drawing the leather apron around us, we screened ourselves from the fury of the rain, it penetrated all protectors, so as to make us feel thoroughly wet. When it had passed away, however, we found rich amends in the backward view of the huge mountain slopes, arrayed in a brassy light from the storm-sunset, which made them look like storm-clouds turned into mighty substances. After that strange splendour had faded away, it soon became quite dark; and it was ten o'clock, and deep night, when we finished our journey at Coire. The mountains and houses seemed oddly confused in the gloom; and we were glad to follow a lad who invited us to the "Capricorn,"—an old, odd sign, appropriately

drawn from the distance of the zodiac—denoting an old-fashioned, homely, but hospitable inn. Here we were welcomed to a long dark room, where, by the light of one flaring tallow candle, we took coffee and cold meat, and engaged a carriage and driver to set forth with us at dawn for Splugen.

At five next morning (24th August) we found coffee, a rickety little carriage, and a smart curly-headed lad ready to drive it, and were soon on the road. The morning was dim and moist, but not wet, and the sad-looking clouds well suited the grey rocks which formed the outworks of the mountains between which our road lay. We soon found that we were travelling on the banks of the Rhine—here dwindled to a shallow mountain stream—and were approaching the confluence of the two upper branches of that famous river. We reached it at Reicheuau, where Louis-Philippe performed the high and humble duties of a school teacher, while his palace-home was made desolate by his father's death and his mother's exile. It would be pleasant to know the princely usher's thoughts, when, after he had patiently endured the toil of contending with the levities and the dulness of school-boys, he retired to his own secret contemplations—more extraordinary than those of any one of his ill-fortuned class—except, perhaps, Eugene Aram. We passed the two Rhine streams by two elegant bridges, and circled the border of a lovely lawn lying beside the Hinter Rhine, as loveable a spot (except the small wild common beyond Servoz), as I remember out of Britain. The road rising gradually, forms a semicircle above it, and the descending bank following the beautiful curve, is fringed with shrub-like trees, while the circled turf is such as fairies would choose for their revels. Ascending the valley of Domleschg, we saw on a green knoll, almost in sight of this bit of verdant peace, a gallows—emblem of infant civilisation, soon, perhaps, to be looked upon as a moral wonder—under which, at long intervals, a sturdy robber has gazed his last on this fair world. From this point, where Law has

planted its terrible footstep, more awful from the solitude around it, the huge valley (such it now becomes), is rough with the vestiges of contests, both elemental and human. It is a wild scene; on the crags which jut out from the mountains, are the remains of feudal holds more ancient, and which nested bandits more fierce, than those of the Rhine in its glory; while the vexed and furrowed earth attests the force of the huge torrent of the Nolla which often lays it waste;—you almost tremble as you look on this wild battle-field of nature and men! It is a small chaos. Nothing is settled there even yet;—language still struggles with language, creed with creed;—for each hamlet differs in tongue and religion from its neighbour; a grand unblessed spot, with the gibbet at one end; the ruined holds of robbers at the other; and desolation in the centre. I turned often from the gloomy grandeur around, to look back; where the tall limestone rocks we had passed harmonised in curious felicity with the cold grey of the sky;—until under the shades of the dark mountains we entered the old, dingy, faded town of Thusis. It has an interest, however, of its own—not out of keeping with the glooms of its neighbourhood, for it carries the mind back to the remote antiquity of Etruscan colonisation in the rude days of Rome. Here we waited for an hour to refresh our horses and ourselves; they took large hunches of black bread; we took a coarse *déjeûné à la fourchette* in a dark upper room, which I fancied like those interesting chambers to which benighted travellers are led in melodramas for purposes beyond hospitality. The black worm-eaten table; the tall cobwebbed walls: the mutton chops, which seemed cut with a cleaver, such as might have been hewn by the old Tuscan knives, savoured of an imperfect civilisation; but there came a dish of stewed prunes, which ended the repast with a relish of sweetness, and left a last pleasant thought of a region still breathing the terrors of the gallows and the sword.

How we should emerge from the rock-built circlet just

beyond us, seemed to me as curious a problem as that which had been solved by the Gemmi Pass ; it was solved more agreeably ; for we cut through the most wonderful cleft of the mountains, by that miracle of a road called by the ill-deserved name of *Via Mala*. At the entrance of this amazing chasm, I observed on a green knoll, or offset of the higher mountain, but pillared on a rock four or five hundred feet high, forms which seemed to me like grave-stones and funeral crosses, and, to my apprehension, denoted a burial-place—and fancy grew busy with the phantasms of perilous journeys performed by pious mourners to lay the remains of their friends in this air-built cemetery, and to suggest various reflections on the choice of a ledge, so far lifted towards heaven, for such a purpose ; of the profound repose of the dead on pillars so lofty—of pilgrimages by the fair and the weak to the tomb, by perilous climbing, made safe by strong love ; of strange figures seen there in storms and moonlight, far beyond mortal questioning ; and gleams of flickering sunlight watched by the eager eye from the plain, till they dazzled it with the images of angel wings. Alas ! all these cobwebs of the brain were soon swept away ; for nearer inspection convinced me that the dark spots on that vivid green were not tombs but ruins, said to be fragments of a castle built almost three hundred years before our era, by Rhætus, the Tuscan Columbus of the Vale. To attempt a description of the road, which for four miles is carried upwards through the cleft—first on one side, then cast by an airy bridge to the other—then in like manner shifted—and so tossed back again—thousands of feet beneath the open air of the free mountain-top, and half as far above the glistening Rhine below—sometimes pierced through the blasted rock, sometimes ledged along it—the steeple-like firs on whose tops you look down far below as on dots of moss, or which bristling on the opposite bank of the chasm almost hang over to your touch—the airy elegance of the bridges that span the deep—the faint roar

and terrible glimmer of the stream below—were worse than idle. We emerged, tending upwards in a broad and bright valley, still having the baby Rhine for our guide, till we stopped at Andeer and entered an inn of considerable size, with the air of desertion about its lofty rooms and terraced garden, but light and clean, as well in accordance with the open heath-land common on which it stands, as the inn at Thusis is, with its impending glooms. As we were obliged to wait here to rest the horses after they had accomplished the ascent of *Via Mala*, we thought ourselves obliged "to take something for the good of the house"—which we did the more willingly as the fine old Hotel seemed sharing the fate of our noble English inns, which railways have made desolate. A bottle of rough red wine was our "something," of which, with the aid of sugar and water, we consumed a portion. When we resumed our carriage the ascent continued, and brought us soon out of the broad valley into another defile, not so extraordinary as that we had passed, but more beautiful—the Rhine meeting us perpetually, as we rose, in a series of cascades of infinite variety; and the firs, so little various in themselves, so disposed as to afford perpetual surprise at their picturesque combinations—sometimes matting together their descending tops like a velvet pall in the precipice below; sometimes bristling around a tall slender rock standing out into the road, as if it were a tower of their own which they were born to guard, and proud to encircle.

Again we emerged from narrowness and gloom into another broad valley,—and the village of Splugen, the destination of our day's journey, appeared in the midst. Its first appearance was that of a cluster of large square whitish houses pierced by many small windows, which might indicate a rural cotton-factory; but no smoke stained the air—no hurtle of unresting wheels mingled with the rushing music of the stream; no groups or gangs of squalid children clouded the cheerful paths; still there was a utilitarian look

about the place, inconsistent even with so much of its noble relations as the mists which hung low down the hills, allowed to be visible. This uneasy sense of Benthamism was, however, dissipated as we approached the first building, which, though consisting of granary and stables, was gaily painted in compartments, like the back scene of a country theatre; and as we passed on among the houses, such agreeable proofs of the felicity of the climate and of the genial disposition of the people multiplied around us. We found the Hotel one of the most thoroughly good—if I were forced to decide I should say the very best—in rural Switzerland, and for real enjoyment preferable even to the grandest of the civic hostelries. It is a large square house—with large low old-fashioned rooms—the landlord of which understands the language and tastes of the English, and the landlady the cookery of the French; which last great fact was manifested in an excellent dinner. Although the repast was served beside a blazing fire, which the dampness of the day and the height of the position rendered acceptable, I quitted this "our Englishman's fire-side" in the mellow light of the rainy evening, to explore a humble ruin which stands about half a mile from the inn. It is a ruin not of an Abbey or Castle or even Château—but of the old Court-house of the little Burgh of Splugen, where a small corporation, "now no more," held their meetings,—let us hope their festivities,—and where some functionary in the nature of a Mayor administered summary justice. Yet it is a true ruin—its brick walls have been crushed by the strong arm of military force; the ivy has clasped it in an embrace as firm as if it had once been a robber's stronghold, and mantles over it as luxuriantly as over the angelic tracery of Tintern. There was something to me peculiarly affecting in this wreck of humble power; it touched at least a new modification of the feeling with which we regard the remains of old time which violence has battered, and nature has rendered lovely. From visions of knightly banquets, desperate

defences, regal sufferings, which the silent dignity of the "Child of loud-throated War" revives, it is pleasant for once to muse over the vestiges of common men who made an attempt at perpetual succession—to feel the spirit of antiquity hallowing the poor remains of a place where Authority, ever needed, by man, once held its narrow sway—perhaps not less revered by the old or less feared by the young than the wisdom which grew immortal in codes, or the power which was terrible in blood. Here, at all events, in old time, was humanity struggling for a date beyond the span of individual life—the ambition, the pride, the vanity of civic power—and here is dust, silence,—and, therefore, interest for the human heart. The old road still winds its track of stones through the meadows to the spot where the town stood; I went and returned by it; feeling that there is no place where a traveller desirous of sequestered musing, not uncheered by good fare, could more happily spend a few days than in this spot, raised nearly five thousand feet above the sea-level; with the infant Rhine for a trout-stream; huge mountains towering into the clouds, for higher thoughts; and the sense that a walk over the brow of one of them will bring him into Italy.

The next morning, Thursday, 25th August, we took that course in a carriage supplied by our pleasant host, who persuaded us to hire it, with horses and a driver, to convey us the whole of our Italian journey, and be discharged at Altorf. The carriage was light, the horses strong;—so far our bargain was discreet; but for the driver—he is still a "great unknown"—he might do all for our good; but he was abundantly provoking. He understood not a word of any language which we knew—German he was said to speak, but whether Goethe or Schiller would have understood him may be doubted; however, had he talked pure German we should, I blush to confess, have been no nearer understanding it than the *patois* which we supposed he knew. As the carriage, horses, and himself, were

essential to our travelling existence, we were under his absolute control for six days; and never surely was despotism so absolute. His ignorance was power. We had not even the power of murmuring at any risk. A censorship of the press; the Great Frederick with his cane; the Emperor of China with his unresting bamboo; Dr. Busby with his rod; the Sultan with his sacks—all shapes of tyranny were mockeries compared to this; because in all the other cases the subject might rebel—braving and taking the consequences—but our griefs found no tongue, or if they did, had only echo to answer them. It was a strange companionship into which we were cast—we knew not what our Mentor thought of us, or intended for us; nor whether he was knave, or fool, or both, or neither. He was quite impenetrable. Sometimes I detected myself expressing some wish, or indicating some displeasure—but stopped laughing at my own folly—a Grecian hero might as well have accused his destiny! If we had been capable of pantomimic action as eloquent as that of Mrs. Charles Kemble was in "Julio," or Miss Kelly's in "Silent not Dumb," or Fanny Elssler's is in anything—he could not, or would not have understood us; he would only have shaken his head as Lord Burleigh did, without Mr. Puff to interpret to us; so we rarely tried it. I could not even address him in that coined and stamped language to which all his tribe are usually sensible—for though I once met a post-boy in Belgium who did not know what a napoleon was when he saw it, never having heard either of the coinage or the conqueror, in general you may impress even the driver and ostler species with a wish by which the *trinkgeld* will be regulated—but as we were not to settle till the hour of parting, there was no opportunity of appealing to the vulnerable parts of a coachman's nature. Through the medium of the innkeeper, or chief *garçon* of the hostelry where we slept—who was "made of penetrable stuff,"—I sometimes contrived to convey to him our wish as to the

hour of setting out in the morning, and the limit of the day's journey—and, in the first, our wish (being for very early starting, and therefore consonant with his own), was generally fulfilled—the other our Jupiter dispersed in air. As to the places of rest during the day, his will was our fate; and all we could do was to submit to its power, and guess its purposes, and moralise upon its issues.

The morning opened in heavy rain; and, after waiting till eight o'clock, in the vain hope of its abatement we commenced our journey up the Splugen Alp. The way lies to the left of the village, crossing the Rhine, and ascending first a deep wooded glen, and then the bare side of the mountain by a zig-zag road, making very sharp angles, and thus rendering the ascent, like many a good book, tedious and gentle. As we ascended, the rain increased, so that to prevent being drenched, we were obliged to avail ourselves of all our leather curtains, which allowed us to see little beyond the edges of our narrow and aspiring path. For awhile the tall wild flowers and bright red berries gleamed upon our loop-holes, and the white walls of Splugen appeared and disappeared, as the road cut through the mist, each turn fainter than before, until we passed through a short low tunnel, and entered on the waste of the mountain, whose huge, round, swelling head seemed made for no purpose but to sustain the curious road with which it was indented. Thus we were taken gently into the clouds; but amidst them we still found, flashing into every little square picture which our protective leathers permitted, the tall purple flowers which do not shrink from the neighbourhood of everlasting snow, and now drenched by the rain, looked more radiant than ever; and on the very summit of our course, where we could only see a few yards round us, the rich brown and yellow of the mosses gave hints of comfort, and looked absolutely warm. These were all we saw, where we had expected to find ourselves amid icy pinnacles, and looking down on the sunny plains of Italy. Descending

over the brow of the great hill, we saw, in clefts and small hollows, patches of snow—else we had no hint of Alpine regions, and might have been traversing *Chat Moss* before the railway. A little way down we came to the Austrian Barrier and Custom House, as dismal a set of stable-like buildings as the world contains, where our passport was, of course, inspected—a ceremony performed with much stiff courtesy, but exciting very uncomfortable apprehensions of a forced return *up* the melancholy hill; so that when the operation was concluded, and the paper restored with a stately bow, I felt as glad that it was over, as if I had just passed a school examination, or lost a tooth. The rain now abated; vast columns of mist went rolling up the hills; and soon I perceived a long line of the descent, not cut now in sharp angles as on the Swiss side, but carried along the sides of a slanting ravine, the bottom of which I could not discern. The road sometimes pierced through long galleries of the rock; sometimes bridged over torrents descending from the heights above us, one of which, swollen by the rains, rushing beneath us, and falling to a great depth below, formed a grand cascade; but as the pass could not be compared for wild strangeness to the *Via Mala*, or in various beauty to the defile between Andeer and Splugen, we were at leisure to regard it merely as a miracle of engineering skill. The breaking and dispersing mists, however, produced very magnificent and grotesque effects; sometimes filling up the valley, and then just opening to show a tall crag or rushing streamlet; sometimes bridging it over, then rushing up the mountain like a crowd of gigantic spectres.

The parapetted way ended in a shaggy vale, which we fancied the end of the descent; in the midst of which we stopped at a cluster of miserable hovels, which a board denoted to be *Campo Dolcino*. The sweetly-spelt name breathed of Italy, but nothing else gave it warrant; the scenery, houses, weather, feeling, were all so entirely

Scottish, that I could scarcely persuade myself that I was not in the Highlands. As the inn presented a most desolate appearance, I declined to enter it, notwithstanding the landlord's disinterested assurance that we must wait here for two hours; and disregarding also the pertinacious pantomime of beggars, aged, robust, and infantine, inviting us to purchase pebbles, or to see cascades, I sat on a dry stone at the end of a small bridge, and pencilled some of the slender memoranda of the last three days' journey, which are now, at the distance of two years, suggestive of these imperfect recollections. Still perceiving no indication of our master's readiness to proceed, I was so struck with the resemblance of the objects around me to those I had repeatedly passed in Scotland, between the King's House and Tyndrum, that I reopened my note-book, and thus *inventoried* them:—"A valley, with an ascending road, beside a strong, bright, stony stream; coarse grass and rushes, interspersed with blocks of grey stone, the floor on each bank; on one side, tall black cliffs, with precipices of intermingled green and loose stones above them; on the other side, hills less steep, of stunted pastures divided by walls compacted of loose stones, diversified here and there by a shattered rock, crowned with short drizzling heather; the stony bed of the stream even now extending far beyond the swollen water, crossed by a wooden bridge, with a dingy house just beyond it, with stairs outside to its first floor." All these features, not rising into grandeur, yet giving hints of its neighbourhood, when seen and felt beneath a murky sky in an uncertain drizzle—a mild specimen of what the Scotch call a "soft day"—brought back old Scotland, not only on my memory, but my heart; and with it the confession that though I had seen greater objects in this journey, more brilliant colours, and more remarkable combinations of the great and the splendid, I had not seen any objects more full of that beauty which the eye loves to feed on, and affection makes its own,—than I have enjoyed in Scotland

and North Wales. Take, merely, by way of example, the Fallock's descent to Loch Lomond, and the Lugwy's course for five miles beside the road to Capel-Cerig,—call to mind the clear brown transparency of the water; the succession of its playful leaps among the grey-stones and over smooth-worn ledges into many a bright basin; the graceful forms of the alders and birches that embower the pools; and then you will hesitate to give your hearty preference to the glorious miracles of the *Via Mala*, or the varied brightness of Schaffhausen.

At last, the appearance of the carriage, with the harnessed horses, gave me intimation of the pleasure of our charioteer that we should proceed, and we obeyed the silent summons, and drove off amidst the maledictory looks of the population, whose services we had slighted. I soon found I had grievously miscalculated our descent, when I supposed we had reached the plain; we were scarcely in mid-way. The valley expanded into the bed of a huge torrent—a vast stony desert, like that which stretches downward from the northern precipice of Ben Nevis. The centre of this waste of stones was occupied by a vigorous stream; but this "lord of the vale" occupied a narrow portion of his throne —the rest was left for his ungovernable moods. As we began to descend, the appearance of our onward course was peculiar; the mist lay thick beneath us, and concealing entirely the slant down which we were about to travel, produced an appearance as if the valley revealed below lay at the foot of a steep precipice, and that valley seemed a basin of sand and stones; edged, however, by vivid green, and circled with steep dark rocks, about which small fleeces of the mists were cleaving; the plain so disclosed bearing a striking resemblance to the Barmouth estuary at low water, which is embedded in lower but lovelier hills. As, however, the valley deepened, the interest deepened with it; groups of noble chestnut trees thickened into woods; the trailing parasite plants spread their net-work over the

hedge-rows ; bright flowers began to start up among the thickening grass ; the stream asserted its dominion over the whole of a more contracted bed ; the vine, assuming its fit supremacy, garlanded pretty villas ; all things gradually changed from the severe to the luxuriant ; and, at the bottom of the descent, the road suddenly turned to the right ; and the old town of Chiavenna, with its grey towers and bright-tiled roofs, burst upon us from its nook scooped out of verdant mountains.

We found excellent accommodation at the principal Hotel, the landlord of which immediately recommended himself to us, by informing us that he had for several years kept the inn at Splugen. We, therefore, left our dinner to his discretion, and found no reason to regret our confidence ; for he sent us nicely-flavoured soup, fresh trout, a cutlet, a bird, and a pudding ; rather too much, perhaps, but else as well conceived and executed as a dinner for two could be at Barrett's Hotel at Ross ; and what more need be, or can be, said ? In wine, however, we committed an error ; being in Italy, we thought we would try Italian wine ; and took some foaming liquid, looking and tasting like a compound of ginger beer and raspberry vinegar—for the first and the last time. This failure was of no consequence ; for some "wine of Chiavenna," of a very delectable pale straw colour, and pleasant sharpness of taste, with nothing worse than a heart-burn in a hogshead of it, soon supplied its place. We did not linger over it, but set out, under the guidance of an old man, a native of Chiavenna, but who had passed all the best part of his life in England, to explore so much of the neighbourhood as three hours of remaining light would show. Poor fellow ! his little story was really piteous. He had been taken from his native place with his father, when a child, to London, and had learned some handicraft trade, and gained a decent livelihood, till—"being without incumbrance," and longing after his birth-place—he saved enough to bring him back to it,

in the belief that he could earn a supply of his scanty wants by guiding English travellers to its beauties. Unhappily for him, he found English travellers generally too eager to pierce into Italy, or to return to Switzerland, to dispend their time in exploring the wonders of this border town ; so that, except for the kindness of our host, about whose yard he passed a languid existence, and who gave him an occasional meal, he could scarcely have lived ; and, though loving still these hills and vineyards, sighed audibly for the flesh-pots of Clerkenwell, which he had imprudently quitted. He took us to see a famous waterfall in the valley of the Meira, which, like many other famous water-falls (reversing the Johnsonian distinction) was not worth *seeing* but was well worth *going to see ;* as the journey to it, and the rocks and woods near it, repaid us for scrambling to a muddy basin, into which a small stream, in two threads, trickled down a lofty black rock, like skeins of silk on a sable ground. The city gateway, through which we passed—a tall open arch, which had once been gaily painted, but was weather-stained—reminded me of the triumphal arch beneath which the great Coriolanus of Covent Garden Theatre stepped on the nights of his latest glory ; and I could almost translate some lively music, which breathed from a festive party in an arbour on the heights adjoining it, into the air, "See the conquering Hero comes," which made my heart leap up in my youth. The country beyond it—the valley of the Meira—has something of the tangled luxuriance of Italy, with more of the rocky grandeur of Switzerland—neither in a very high degree. Lying among mountains, which form the last and lowest ridges of the Alpine barrier, it is chiefly interesting as the scene of ruin, which, two hundred years ago, buried the city of Pleus, in the shape of an avalanche of stones. The only traces of the old city are the rough grounds where the houses and halls lie crushed ; but one lone church tower—the church buried by

a later visitation of the same earthy power—connects the present time with the old catastrophe. Though the church is gone, the old church clock still strikes its "bewildered chimes," and bells hang in the belfry, which are sometimes rung on Saints' days and holidays ;—a mournful sight—a tower without a church! There was a time when the apprehensive lovers of the Church of England might be forgiven for trembling lest such an image should be significant of her position ; lest the state of priesthood, stiffened into frigid pride, should preserve the symbols of greatness without extending the protection of goodness ; and leave the church, in which immortal hopes visit the humblest, to decay, while the steeple survives. Happily these fears are dispelled : a living spirit has quickened every old and sacred form ; the spire lifts its head to the skies, lord of the region ; and the lowlier roof below it gathers rich and poor beneath its affectionate and holy shelter.

Sir Walter Scott somewhere remarks, that the most interesting regions are those which, interspersed between the wild and the beautiful, partake of both ; a theory, which, if not true before, he was able to realise ; and yet which does not seem here to apply so as to render the border land of Italy and Switzerland as interesting as either. The objects seen within a narrow sphere of vision, from the small balcony of the hotel at this place, are separately striking ; some are singular, some lovely ; but they rather divide into several small pictures than blend in one harmonious whole. To the left is the stately city gate, looking Roman, if not Roman ; above it, slanting from a black rock, a vineyard of rich green, uplifted in air ; next curves a rocky height, crowned with a ruined castle, about which vines are trained, and on the walls of which they are trellised ; in front is a richly-wooded hill, with a crescent top waving with great trees ; to the right are mean buildings, and the old gaunt cathedral towering above deep black ranges of bone-houses, which

resemble a Venetian palace vulgarised ; and just below, are children playing happily in dirt, but without sun. The air is chill—no perfume of Italy yet scents it ; and while we hope to remember Chiavenna, we look forward eagerly to the morrow for that "draught of the warm south," which we have not yet tasted.

CHAPTER IV.

GLIMPSE OF ITALY.

Journey to Colico—Lake of Como—Varenna—Lecco—Como—Journey arrested—Lugano—Bellinzona.

THE dawn of Friday, 26th August, did not flatter our sunny hopes; it was cold and misty, with gusts of rain, and the scenery through which we passed was barren and stern. Our road lay through black rocky eminences; at one part assuming, on each side, the forms of mighty skeletons of mountains; with hollows amid narrow ridges stretching from the background mass, like the edges which inclose the huge coves beneath the summit of Helwellyn, or the mightier basins of Snowdon; in one of which a huge mass of mist sat enthroned as a gigantic spirit in his chair, and remained with an almost frightful pertinacity, while the gentler clouds were vanishing under the influence of the ascending sun. We left it there, and proceeded by the side of a small black lake, until the great lake of Como appeared through the hills; and, by the time we had reached its head at Colico, all was dry and glowing on earth, and the sun was alone in heaven. Huge yellow flowers spangled the marshes; creeping and climbing vegetation perplexed the hedgerows; and lizards glimmering along every dwarf bit of wall, and peering out of every hole in the bank, almost lined the path with life. We felt now that we were in Italy; and sitting on a roadside wall, and watching the lizards at their play, indulged the appropriate sense of careless lassitude, and willing submission to the absolute power of our destiny, while its master and ours refreshed himself and the horses. The journey along the margin of the lake soon glowed into luxuriant beauty, while its head, buried in rocky mountains,

reminded me of the Scotch sea-lochs, where, like Loch Goil, they run into, and almost under, their grotesque head-crags; the side on which our path lay was all of a sunnier—I will not say a happier clime. There, too, the rock often stretched out its ponderous tusks before us into the deep blue water; but had been blasted for the road, which ran through gallery after gallery—bright tunnels, which might have connected Aladdin's subterraneous gardens with the outward crust of the world. Through their arched openings the vast blue water was seen, if not in perfect combination, in most glorious contrast; while every fold in the hills opening fan-like, and every dark gulley which furrowed them, was garlanded with the vine; here not in stunted independence, but in its own affectionate embracing nature, clasping the rock or the trellis, and exuberant with bunches of grapes, already black, redolent of infant and innocent Bacchus. Winding along this enchanted shore, we reached Varenna, where we stopped to dine at a charming inn, and where our sense of luxury was sated. It was the hottest part of the day; we were in a large back chamber, looking down on the lake, now of fervid blue, and across it to lofty mountains, the dusky simplicity of whose bare summits and breasts rendered the vast growth of noble trees, and luxuriant underwood which clothed their feet, and the bounteous vines just beneath us, more charming. A little beyond Varenna the lake divides into two branches; that on our side terminating at Lecco; that opposite in Como, with the bright promontory of Bellagio between; so that while one branch of the lake feasted the eye, the other gave scope for the fancy to follow it through long lucid reaches, or to deck it with happy islands. And see! as we gaze, a boat partly covered with a crimson awning, rowed by eight youths in white jackets, glides from beneath the glittering foliage beneath us, and skims along the lake, disturbing the expanse of blue with gayer colour, and peopling its solitude with joy. All within accords with the prospect; the wainscots are

painted in rich but delicate colours; the floors are tesselated; aromatic shrubs perfume the landing-places; the jugs have the shapes of antique vases; all breathing of a purely ornamental life. Action here seems impossible,—suffering a mere variety of sensation—one has nothing to do but to be, and to be is to enjoy. Dinner did not dissipate the illusion; and a bottle of very good red hermitage heightened and prolonged it. We had proposed to reach Como in the evening; but as we were unable to cross the lake with our carriage, and were, therefore, obliged to follow it to its point at Lecco, and thence to cross the country to the foot of the other branch at Como, the journey would be a long day's work; and we learned from our host of Chiavenna, who interpreted between us and our driver, that the potentate could not or would not do it, and that we *must* sleep at Lecco. We obeyed of course; and, after another deliciously hot drive along the margin of the lake, arrived at the extremity of its Lecco branch early in the evening.

Lecco is a dirty town, with dark narrow streets; but how "free and easy" life seemed to be in them! At sunset all its population was abroad—not in the meadows, but in the streets—all disporting themselves after their own whim (you cannot call it *will*)—the young as if the world contained no schoolmaster; the old as if it owned no empire of opinion; some lounging on benches drinking lemonade or light wine; some playing cards at low tables placed across the gutters, with hands and cards equally dark; but no drunkenness, no riot, no ill-humour was seen amidst that dirty, careless race. But the most marvellous thing to me was the extreme vivacity and variety of colour which flashed, and glistened, and deepened, and harmonised in the motley scene. If the vagabonds had all engaged to contribute some bit of colour to the picture, they could not have produced more vivid effects than those which the instinct of their nature shed on their apparel and grouping. No matter whether young or

old, shapely or deformed, in decent attire or in rags, all tended to the picturesque; a light-blue cap, a crimson jacket, a scarlet cloak, a green handkerchief, a bunch of ribands, some bright streak flashed gladness on the scene, wherever you glanced, independent of the clear olive-complexion, and merry black eyes which beamed out among the vagrant crowds. In-doors this love of colour was more elaborately exerted; our inn rooms were all painted in compartments—walls, ceilings, floor; we had fallen on a coloured world, where "motley 's your only wear." And surely here the poet's advice—"*Ne crede colori*," will be given in vain. Colour, in truth, is the most trustworthy of all appearances; it cannot deceive you; for all that it seems it is; and unless we have "the inky cloak" on our spirits, we need know nothing but "seems" while we enjoy it.

Our journey on the morning of 27th August, from one foot of the great lake at Lecco to the other at Como, though short, had the requisites of an epic poem—an adequate beginning, middle, and end—each distinct, yet all forming a complete whole. The beginning consists of a gradual development and perfect view of Lecco in a basin—almost urn—of rocky mountains, reminding me of that noble circlet amidst the highest Scotch hills, with a huge pulpit-like rock in its centre, which opens behind Ballahulish; its middle a succession of quiet green lanes, like those we enjoy in the midst of England, with views of two small, unpretending lakes; its end a long, majestic, refulgent descent to Como, enthroned at the head of its own lake, here peopled with bright pleasure-boats, with a towering castle for its crown. We waited for some hours in this city while our passports were inspected and our horses refreshed, partly spent in a magnificent saloon at the hotel, where the enrichments of Italian taste were most lavishly employed; shaded from the blazing noon by curtains alternately scarlet and white, and balconied with a shrubbery

of orange-trees and flowering myrtles; and partly in the cathedral, where mass was in the course of its celebration. This church, not remarkable in its exterior, standing amidst a crowd of houses, was "glorious within;" not so rich from its architectural grandeur, as from the felicitous combination and contrast of colour in its draperies. An immense curtain of crimson and gold floated behind the high altar; lemon-coloured draperies half shaded the upper windows, which softened and beautified the sunlight; purple velvet canopied the pulpit; crimson, yellow, and white, waved about the oratories or chapels; and yet, so happily were the hues combined or contrasted, that nothing seemed gaudy, or inconsistent with that modification of the devout feeling which renders the Catholic faith, as cherished on the South of the Alps, less *Christian* than *Marian*. The instinct of colour breaking out in all the appliances of life is felt here as well as in Lecco; but its effects are not so remarkable in the luxurious city as among the half-witted, half-scape-grace population of the country town; and the business of life, progressing here in decent shops, which involve something of a respectable tameness, checks the impulses of vanity, idleness, and grace. We should have been delighted to remain here till the next day, especially as large bills announced that the opera of "The Capulets and Montagues,"—terms which I presume include Romeo and Juliet,—would be represented in the evening. Beyond the pleasure of being in again within the precincts of the drama, there must have been a peculiar fascination in the enactment of that story of love and death, which our poet has invested with the atmosphere of its native Italy, in the climate which, faintly supplying the breath of genius, might dispose the spectator to the perception of love born and matured in a few hours; of its brief intoxication excelling years of ordinary existence; and of death as its luxurious triumph over separating power.

The arrangements, or rather the laws, of our journey

were inflexible ; and we started soon after noon for Lugano ; but an incident occurred, by way of a new variety among passport vexations, which nearly sent us back to Como and Juliet. Having passed a long avenue of plane-trees, suggesting an unexpected link of sympathy with our own smoke-canopied London, where they retain their greenness longer than any of their timber brethren, and having commenced the ascent of a long hill by a deep road embedded in vineyards, we were stopped at the barrier with the usual demand of passport ; it was obeyed without misgiving, for the document had been *viséd* only an hour before at Como, and therefore I thought must be right, especially as, if we were dangerous to the repose of Austria, she was about to be well rid of us. The delay seemed long ; at length, our coachman half ran, half staggered out of the office, quite chopfallen—his small brown eyes twinkling with tears ; his wide mouth twisting into all sorts of wry expression ; he pointed to the onward road and to us ; put his hand upon his waistcoat, and shook his head ; and then, as if he made our position quite intelligible, proceeded to remove our bags from the carriage. It was now time to seek explanation elsewhere ; and on inquiry within the office, which we had not before entered, we were informed that *our* passport was perfectly correct ; that *we* were quite at liberty to quit the dominions of the emperor with all our baggage, and with the carriage and horses if we chose to take them ; but that our coachman must be left behind, as *he* had no passport at all, and ours would not serve him. The chief officer, however, who was very courteous, said he would not allow the driver to take the carriage and horses from us, but would find another driver, who should take us on with them, and restore them to the owner at Splugen ; who, as he truly said, ought to have foreseen and provided for the exigency by obtaining a passport for his servant. I could not, however, leave our poor dumb coachman (" dumb to *us*," as the Ghost to Horatio) thus without his carriage, nor was I dis-

posed to add to the calendar of causes in the Splugen department; and, therefore, I determined to pay him what might be rather more than just; to return to Como; to go to the Opera whither Juliet seemed to beckon me; and then, anticipating what I had reserved for another excursion, to go to Milan, and return by the Simplon instead of the St. Gothard Pass. I was puzzled, however, to find the means of arranging our accounts with the driver, and was about to ask the officer to be the interpreter, and if necessary the mediator between us, when a young fellow in the office said to me in good English, "You had better send in the man to tell his own story: he 'll manage it." I did so; and, in a very few minutes the man returned, jerking up his head with as much of merriment as his phlegmatic nature allowed; replaced the luggage; made signs to us to mount; cracked his whip in the face of some rustics who had witnessed his discomfiture; and resumed the reins and his authority over us. By what means he prevailed I knew not; our counsellor, who I suspect was an idle borderer on society, acquainted with the ways of the office, and catching any stray gift of fortune, came smirking up with an "*I told you so,*" in a manner which implied an expectation of more than thanks, and took his back-handed *honorarium*, like the Nurse in the drama we had forsaken; our banishment from that night's Verona was sealed: and we were again the creatures of our coachman.

We went on pleasantly through wood and vineyard, until the first view of the lake of Lugano burst upon us,—a great bit of intense blue between two dark hills clearly cutting it into a sharp angle, with the paler blue horizon beyond it. The picture was perfect in its kind; there were only two colours indicated,—blue and very dark green,—the lake, the sky, and the slanting hills; the hills sloped as evenly as if they were the sides of an angle in Euclid; they were both equally dark; and except that the blue of the sky was much lighter than that of the water, there would

scarcely have been a shade to interfere with the entireness of the two contrasted colours. We afterwards enjoyed glimpses of the lake through the woods, more complex in their beauty, till we reached its shore, and found we were to cross it at a ferry. At this prospect, our driver's inert nature was quickened into fear or repugnance; he seemed inclined to resist the boatmen who led the horses to the rude pier; and I began to doubt whether he would not insist on returning. The boatmen, however, soothed if they failed to convince him; and he doggedly took his stand in the boat, shrugging up his shoulders, and looking almost as stupidly wretched as when he was stopped at the barrier. We reached the town in safety; found it very dirty, notwithstanding its lovely lake; and very mean, in spite of the music of its name; and took up our quarters at a very ill-scented hostelry, bearing the heroic name of "The William Tell." We consoled ourselves, however, with warm baths, which we found just out of the town; and with a sail on the lake, almost too lovely to be recollected, except with the dimness of a dream, in the twilight and starlight of a breathless evening.

Next morning, turning our steps again towards the Alps, we quitted Lugano at six o'clock, and after a journey of four hours through a country the far greater part of which might be English, but for the lizards which gleamed about the hedgerows, and the last consisted of a noble descent through long reaches of wooded road into a huge mountain valley, reached Bellinzona, where we rested for the day. It was Sunday, and proved a day of delicious rest, although, being strangers to the language, and inexperienced in the rites of its worship, we did not hallow it with those solemnities which should consecrate and deepen the Sabbath's repose. This small city, one of the capitals of the canton of Tessin, and, therefore, though lying at the southern foot of the Alps, owning Swiss dominion, comprises within the small circuit of its immediate vicinity as

much of interest and beauty as any town I have visited. Strong in situation, and most important in position (speaking in that warlike language which is beginning to be, happily, obsolete), it has been the object of many a bloody contest; and now presents the remains of no less than three fortresses, two in the lap of glowing vegetation, and one cresting it. The central castle is still used as an arsenal, and its walls are those of the town, which is still bound in by walls and towers. Of the furthest castle I know nothing beyond the effect of its clustering turrets and strong iron-bound walls in the scene. The loftiest and the rudest was the object of our "preferable regards;" and we passed the larger part of our summer's day within the shade of its ruins. Having partaken of such a breakfast as four hours' travelling inspires and justifies—not, be sure, of tea and bread-and-butter only—and ordered our dinner at the strangely genteel hour of six o'clock, we proceeded to spend all the intervening wealth of time within the shadow of our selected castle. A narrow alley led from the town to the ascent of the hill, lying between two gardens or vineyards, and entirely canopied by vines trained over it, from which thousands of bunches of ripe black grapes hung down to tempt the touch—a bower of perhaps three hundred yards in length. Thence emerging, we found our way up the long hill—unshaded and sultry at first, but soon clothed with noble trees—and scrambled, by right or by wrong, to the small platform of weed-woven brick and rock on which the ruins stand. From a narrow terrace—scarce more than a ledge fronting them—to which we climbed, is a fine view of the two subject castles; the walled city almost like a miniature, for you may walk from gate to gate in five minutes; the long grey bridge over the Ticino; the affluent country, backed by the lower roots of the Alps: but the silent, dismantled, desecrated tower itself was more interesting than all. It seemed to be used as a storehouse for agricultural produce and implements. The sickle had

literally replaced the sword; most of the ornaments had quite mouldered in dust; but in one large room, used as a granary, was still a large mouldering fresco, which seemed to represent the story of Tell; a small feature of which only seemed appropriate to the wild orchards which occupied the courts; the archery was gone, but the apples flourish still. Beneath one of the old apple-trees which were scattered about in a Sicilian fruitfulness, we lay down, thinking of Wales and Scotland, and idly comparing their grandeur with Alpine scenes, and engaged with the thousand busy thoughts which people an idle day, till we fancied the hour of dinner had arrived, and slowly wended our way home. Beside our path, close to the entrance of the town lay a snake, killed since we passed the spot, a beautiful reptile of at least four feet in length, of a pale lead colour—quite as harmless, I have no doubt, when alive as now, but a victim to the ancient enmity between men and serpents; which does not, however, deprive their race of a certain strange interest, which compels ours to gaze on them, living or dead. We had some time yet; and walked round the outside of the old walls to see some boys rob a vineyard with a deliberation and boldness which would have done honour to Lord Eldon's childhood; placing stones in a stream which ran beneath the wall, and then hoisting a slender boy—like Oliver Twist in size, but more merry and less innocent—over it, who threw over huge bunches to them, and climbed back to share the spoil. They paid no attention to us, wisely considering we should not inform against them, but ran off, leaving some of the bunches behind them, when a party of very young soldiers—or, rather, citizens' sons under drill for soldiers—appeared under the command of two soldiers in uniform, trying to march. They were an awkward squad indeed; and two small embryo drummers, trying to make a noise, beat time and tune at once very merrily, notwithstanding a cuff they now and then received from their sergeant tutors. We

dined excellently ; and as we were to be called at four, to commence a very long day's journey up the Alpine Pass to Airolo, we went to bed at the primitive hour of nine. Our good-natured host made light of my regret that he should be disturbed so early, and told us we should have coffee before starting :—"At four I knock at your door ; at half-past four you descend ; you take your coffee in comfort ; at five you depart." And he kept his word, and we our time. We left him with regret, hoping to see him again some day, and meanwhile desirous to recommend to all our friends, whether they have just crossed the Alps or are about to cross them, to rest one day at Bellinzona beneath the wings of its *Eagle*.

CHAPTER V.

RETURN TO SWITZERLAND BY THE PASS OF ST. GOTHARD, AND THENCE TO LONDON.

The Valley of the Ticino—Airolo—Falsehood of the Sentiment that the Feeling of creative Power predominates in wild Scenery rather than in the Harmonies of Nature—The Descent of the Reuss—Fluellen—Altorf and Tell's Story—Church Decorations at Fluellen—The Lion of Lucerne—Rapid Return to Mannheim—The Theatre of Mannheim—Voyage down the Rhine—The Bubbles from the Brunnens *v.* English Education—Return to London—Remarks on the Tour.

WITH our departure from Bellinzona closed our glimpse of Italy; our faces were set towards Switzerland; and, but that our retrograde course proved our holiday to be waning, I should not have regretted the change; for the mountains are far dearer to me, even in mist and cloud, than the plains beneath the sunniest skies. We spent thirteen hours of the next day (29th of August) in mounting the valley of the Ticino, a river worthy the music of its name. From the point, a few miles from Bellinzona, where two great Alpine valleys diverge—one to the Pass of Bernardino, the other to that of St. Gothard—the ascent is almost continuous; at first very gentle; then laborious; then almost precipitous, unless it were rendered easy by the windings of the road; generally a wide umbrageous vale, though sometimes, where steepest, contracted almost into a gully: but in all it is *majestic;* better deserving of that particular epithet than any defile I have seen, even among the Alps. It is vast; the hills on each side rising to a height of from three thousand to four thousand feet, but embraces not only rich shrubs and brushwood, but a succession of noble trees; and its river, though "born so high" as the top of the Pass, is not of the glacier turbid, but spring-fed, and only owes to the

snow the pale blue which just tinges without staining it. It is neither a rivulet nor a torrent, but a great body of pure living water, far larger than any river we had yet found among the mountains, which, tracing it upwards through its course of various beauties—rapids, cataracts, and cascades —we might fancy streamed from the skies. A little below Airolo it receives another river, which falls into it from a height forming a waterfall, which, even at the distance of half a mile, at which it is surveyed from the road, looks a fearful streak of white foam. Presently the mountains closed upon the road; we passed an old Roman fortress just above it, simple and alone in its grandeur; then the valley extended again; but "the pomp of groves, and garniture of fields," had given place to a wide mossy common, pierced by grey rocks; and, turning up a short, steep ascent, between dingy stables and stable-looking houses, we stopped at a low, whitewashed, square-windowed house, like an old Highland inn, fronting the open part of the small town, and were told we had reached the end of our day's journey. Hungry and tired, I was glad to hear it; but, on looking back, I cannot call to mind any one day's journey the scenes of which convey an impression at once so single and so perfect as this.

The rooms of the inn were chilly and dark; but the cold was soon removed by a fire, and the darkness lightened by the attendance of two pretty *grisettes*, who spoke French and read novels. After dinner, I started out alone up the old road, the stones of which have been scattered by many storms, and which is neglected now for the new grand engineering work, which, after the manner of the Splugen, makes its sharp angles on the breast of a huge bare mountain. The good old way is still the pleasanter to stroll on;—and afforded a perfect view of the solitary grandeurs of this far upland valley. All here is vast,—unadorned, —(for the scattered bushes, though brightening the wayside are mere dots in the prospect)—silent, except that the

river far below is guessed by its softened gurgle. And here are other vestiges of Alpine nature ; a vast mass of snow in an urn-like bed lies among mountains to the left ; and tops capped with real *sunned* snow, not lying in nooks or clefts, in front—almost strangers to us throughout our journey, and, therefore, the more impressive. When I thought of twice passing the Alps, I expected to grow familiar with icy pinnacles ; but I had seen till now little more of ice or snow than you may discern throughout the summer, streaking the great summit above Glencoe, or wreathed among the north-eastern declivities of Ben Nevis.

In the deep solitude of this our most Alpine hour, I felt my mind, instead of expanding with the scene, shrink and shiver within me ; the awful description of Coleridge's Ancient Mariner—of his feeling in the enchanted ocean—"so lonely 'twas that God himself scarce seemed there to be," came upon my thought ; and I was forced to project my mind into brighter scenes to cast off the "burthen of mystery" with which these huge forms of matter oppressed it. Surely it is a false application of a great sentiment to represent that, amidst the vast desolation of scenes like these, the presence of creative and providential goodness is more vividly indicated than in the common pathway of life ; that an unhumbled spirit finding Divinity nowhere else, must recognise it in these dumb fastnesses of nature ; or that the devout believer should feel himself more in the immediate presence of his Maker here than in the plain or the city. Such raptures,—if not misplaced at the sight of a vast chaos, like the cataract of Niagara, a world of water inevitably tumbling down from the sudden descent of its channel, — have no especial or peculiar propriety which should exclude equal consciousness of the Divine in livelier scenes. Surely it is not beneath the pinnacles of heights unvisited by human step ; in huge unpeopled solitudes ; in regions of ancient ruin and present desolation, that the mind more intensely perceives the workings of merciful

Wisdom, than in the daily sunrise, the unfailing succession of seasons, the development of the humblest flower from its seed; the smallest, faintest, commonest harmonies of the universe! It is true that when the mind, at first overwhelmed by those huge inequalities which mark the ruins of centuries, finds relief in tracing out the beauty which everywhere gradually cleaves to them, and perceives a spirit of loveliness ever working to clothe rude chasms with waving verdure, and sculpture out fair beds for the tortured torrents to rest in, it throws off the weight of stifling matter, and rejoices in its celestial relations. But there is more kindred with our heaven-ward thoughts, and, therefore, more living proofs of their divine source, in the humblest movement of the lowest intellect—in the infant's dawning smile—even in the instincts of animal affection, than in all these majestic tossings of the rind of the outer world. Within ourselves we may find the unerring witness to Him who moulded us, if we devoutly regard the depths of our own being; instead of being taught the cold lesson to "look through Nature up to Nature's God," strive to look out upon nature from Him; and rise towards heaven on the wings of faith and love, instead of trying to ascend by the ladder of natural history. If the proud philosopher who has crushed the sense of Deity beneath his selfishness and his scorn, finds it rising upon him in scenes like these, it is not because they supply suggestions with which every movement of his own mind, if wisely scanned, is more pregnant; but because here—alone in a tempest-riven wilderness of rock, the truth starts out upon him, and the depth of the solitude forces him to confess that Presence which alone peoples it.

Our longing after icy sublimities was not gratified in our morning passage of the Alps, which began almost in the dark, and was soon clouded by mist, and blinded by rain. At first, we walked up the zig-zag road before the horses, and after many dismal twistings, were refreshed by the sight of our old friend the Ticino, spanned by a noble arch; and

crossing, saw its stream rolling, tumbling, foaming down a series of cascades, having all the beauty to itself, except where here and there it had quickened into verdure a small group of trees. The pelting rain drove us to take refuge in the carriage, but at every turn of the road we caught a glimpse of the strong-hearted river, diminished almost to a rivulet, but rioting in young power, leaping from chasm to chasm by our side. At the summit, in the rain and mist, we lost it—just at its source—and passing along a dismal plain, in which we saw nothing but a small stony-edged lake, began to descend by long slants over a desolate common. We soon found ourselves accompanied by another river—the infant Reuss—to which we were wedded for the course of its natural life; so we were scarcely "off with our old love" before we were "on with the new." A little onward the village of Hospital came in view, crested by an old weather-stained tower, standing amidst a desolation which might have satisfied "the lost Aspasia," without the sea-beach, but leading to a startlingly vivacious hotel with white walls and green windows. Here, having started at half-past five, and travelled four hours in mist and rain, we reckoned on stopping to breakfast, notwithstanding a mysterious warning which some discontented Englishman had written over the mantel-piece of the inn at Airolo—"Englishmen, beware the inn at Hospital; beware of the landlord; beware of his Lion." Quite ready to take evidence of the truth or falsehood of this libel, we made the most eloquent signals in our power to our coachman; but he first nodded his head like a mandarin, to show that he understood our wish, and then shook it, like Lord Burleigh, to indicate that he could not grant it. Why he was disinclined to refresh himself and the horses I could not guess, for I had no more means of penetrating his mind than that of the cat (if cats have minds), who lay as sleek and happy in one of the Lion's windows, as if she had not been 6000 feet above the sea. Whatever might be the motive, the

action was unequivocal; he gave his whip a scornful crack, almost in the face of the libelled landlord, who stood beneath his own placid Lion with inviting looks, and whirled us on, looking back on the Alpine puss with envy. About two miles further, a slender tower or spire—tower rather, tapering into a spire,—with its painted head, indicated the town of Andermatt; here, at all events, we hoped to stop—in vain; the head again shook, the whip again cracked; and very hungry, half angry, and half smiling, we passed two inviting hotels, and resigned ourselves to our fortune. The glen now contracted to a gully, scarcely wider than the *Via Mala* itself; and passing through a long cavern—hewn, or blasted through the rock—we descended by a road scarcely inferior to that glorious way, in its giddy magic, by the side of a river of far superior power to the Rhine, in that dark passage of its early life. The Reuss is a more powerful river even than the Ticino; far inferior in colour—being of a turbid brown instead of a lucid blue—but its colour as well befits its bed, which is channelled in brownish stone, sometimes so evenly cut by the water, as to wear the appearance of having been hewn by art, as that of the Ticino harmonises with its broad forest margin. As in the *Via Mala*, the road is carried repeatedly across the river, and by bridges even more stupendous; in one place by a bridge which looks down on a solemn spot, where the ancient bridge remains, unparapetted, now hoar with lichens and mosses, hanging above a twilight depth, in which the still water scarcely glimmers—a master-piece of ancient daring and skill. To this bridge the Devil's name has been, as in similar cases of might, beauty, and terror, given; why, it would be hard to conjecture; unless, on the questionable authority of Milton, whose fallen angels construct the fatal bridge over Chaos, the Devil must be regarded as the first engineer, as well as the first whig. When the gully widened into a glen, the stern and savage character still prevailed; though rich pastures bordered the

river, the mountains were skirted with black firs ; and, though noontide was approaching, the clouds bent over all with congenial gloom. At last, in the widest part of the valley, our driver drew up at the door of a regularly Swiss-built wooden house—a perfect specimen of the Swiss rustic architecture—and made a sign, which we were ready enough to understand, that here we might satisfy our hunger. The place did not look very hopeful; for pigs were rioting before the door, and the curtilage seemed neglected, as if from want of custom ; but we were greeted, on our entrance, by a fat, good-natured-looking hostess, whose husband, almost as fat and as genial, was eating broth out of a huge bowl ; while a trimly-dressed little girl, and a stout rosy boy, were engaged over smaller bowls, apparently in the same pleasant occupation. After my companion had made the good landlady understand that we wanted every possible thing in the greatest possible hurry, we were shown into a long low room, lighted by several small square windows, with wainscot and ceiling all carved in wood (for wood-carving in Switzerland supplies the place of painting in Italy), but soon found, from appearances, that the family were good Catholics ; a crucifix lay on a table in one corner, and on the wall hung a coloured print of Leonardo da Vinci's Last Supper, which not only graced the wall, but seemed almost to sweeten the air ; so delightful are these Christian humanities among the ponderous solitudes of an Alpine pass ! In less time than we hoped our repast appeared ; small but savoury soup, with parsley and sippets of bread ; a large trout from the Reuss, served with sauce which I did not scrutinize ; a knuckle of mutton, boiled (as I think) to perfection—that is, to rags ; a roast fowl ; and cheese and almonds for dessert,—which, with a bottle of sweet white wine, called *Asti*, diluted with water, were enjoyed as thoroughly as the famous supper which appears, by Chiffinch's art, in the rude inn in " Peveril of the Peak," of which I have many times partaken. I was really ashamed

of its profusion ; and when the bill slowly appeared at our call, that feeling was enhanced by the smallness of the charges, and by the gracious courtesy (which might have befitted a fat prima donna) with which the amount, with a trifle added for little Miss—who had waited upon us as lightly as if she had been a fairy—was accepted by our hostess. As our driver, who, no doubt, had some reason of his own for bringing us hither, manifested no symptoms of departure, we strolled up a gentle hill, to the village churchyard, the most cheerful spot in the valley, streaked with grassy paths closely mown ; and though the memorials of the dead were even more frail than our humblest slabs or headstones, consisting chiefly of slender crosses of painted wood, with sometimes a bit of tarnished gilding, about to yield to the wind and rain the last show of ornament which freshly-stricken affection had lavished, they enhanced the old lesson of earthly fragility ; for they seemed to signify how soon the little of us that survives fades from the eye, and from the thoughts of all except of the very dearest. Whether it be true, as the poet asserts that—

> " The thought of death sits lightly on the man
> Who has been born, and dies among these mountains,——"

certain it is, that the brightest spot of the glen had been selected for the living to indulge it.

On our return to the inn, our driver was smoking a long pipe at the door ;—so we exhibited ourselves in a state of what Macbeth calls " manly readiness,"—that is, with great-coats on, and staffs in hand—looked at him till we were quite sure he saw us, and walked onward. He did not stir ; so we sat down on a rock, almost as moveless as he, watching the course of a strong rivulet, which broke from a dark chasm, and rushed by many cascades to the river, and waited his pleasure. In about an hour more, we saw symptoms of motion ; returned to the front of the inn ; took another leave of its inmates, who seemed to have

good-nature enough among them to sweeten the temper of any one given body of authors, artists, or players; and were soon once more on our way. Still we descended; the river sometimes sank many hundred feet below us, so that we could only trace its course by the black waving line of its sunken rocks; sometimes it rushed by our side: three great rounded mountains appeared in front of the basin into which we seemed tending; those on our sides rose up to great height, indicated occasionally by a touch of white; and the effect of the scenery became more and more oppressive. There was beauty in detail—sometimes exquisite beauty—in the dingles among which the river often fell; in the flowering pastures that swept down to the dark pillars of its channel; in round clumps of trees among wastes of stones like islands; but my mind could not rest on these in the presence of the black and grey masses, which prevailed in the contest between beauty and terror. At last, when we had nearly reached the level, where the mountains had threatened to imprison us, the road made a sudden turn, and all was changed as in the shifting of a scene; for before us lay a bright, open plain, variegated with orchards, corn-fields and cottages, through which our river wound, but serene, broad, deep, and home-featured almost as our own rural Thames; and on the right uprose a cluster of villas and hotels—all white, with pale-green windows, looking like an out-of-townish village—a place for pleasure, at a convenient distance from some thriving city. It was an unspeakable relief; but the sun was declining; and where was Altorf? I tried to learn from my driver how far it was to Altorf. To my consternation, he shook his head, and pointed to the hills behind us. I knew nothing of the country; *Murrayless*—having lost my "Guido, Philosopher and Friend," that is, "my Murray," in the Rhine steamer—and really began to wonder where we should find ourselves at nightfall. A lake dawned between the two hills before us; could it be other, I idly asked, than the Lake of

Lucerne? Again the head was shaken, and on we went, through an old, dull, faded street, of a melancholy-looking town. I tried to elicit its name; I understood the oracle to answer "Leila," which puzzled me still more. My perplexity was soon over; we approached the head of a lake, into which our river fell; stopped at the door of a neat hostelry; our journey was done—we were at Fluellen; whither, and not to Altorf, I suppose our commander had been commissioned to bear us; and we had just passed through Altorf, scarcely suspecting that we were on such heroic ground. There was nothing, to be sure, to identify it, as we did not observe the painted tower; none of Knowles's localities, which we had thought as real as his domestic pathos; no rock; no fortress; no city gate; no icy pinnacles; only a huge, fair, lifeless village. Here we were, however, on the Lake of the Four Cantons; our hour of manumission was come on this soil of liberty; we hailed the genius of "Universal Emancipation;" we were free! By the aid of the landlord, I settled with our discrowned despot, apparently to his satisfaction—certainly to mine—for when his hand closed on the last piece of money, and he grinned his thanks, I felt as I suppose Sinbad did, when the Old Man of the Sea fell off his shoulders. Like other emancipated slaves, we began our course of freedom by a difference between ourselves—the important question being no less than whether we had dined or not. My companion insisted that our repast at the good Swiss house was breakfast; I that it was dinner. There was something to be said on both sides; so we gave ourselves the benefit of the doubt; ordered dinner; and strolled back on foot to see the famous Altorf. We there found some memorials of Tell, in rude inscriptions, and a gaudily painted tower, representing Gessler's atrocity on the spot where the boy is said to have sustained the apple for the shot; but confused with a strange mixture of allegory and fact, as if the fact was too shocking to be nakedly

presented ; and even the reality was made more gaudy than vivid. This celebrated story, notwithstanding the interest which genius has woven round it, is to me so painful—the act of the tyrant such a piece of mere base cruelty—the acquiescence of the father so questionable in feeling (especially as he had an arrow concealed, which he might as well have put to its right use before his shot as after it) and the result so unsatisfactory, leading directly to nothing but the renewed captivity of the archer—that I would rather take refuge in the hope "that it is not true," than seek with avidity for its vestiges. At first sight, Altorf had the air of a small decayed town, from which trade had long departed ; but as we examined it closer, it seemed as if no mere gradual change could have made it so desolate. We wished to purchase some small articles of dress ; and searched it through and through to find a shop which might possibly supply us ; but in vain. Clean ; decorated with weather-stained inscriptions ; ornamented with some good houses, half or wholly closed—it seemed rather like a burgh from whence the inhabitants had been swept, or frighted by some sudden calamity ; for even the urchin race, who should be fostered by the example of little Tell—the true hero of the tale—and who seldom fail to enliven the streets, where there is any life, were wanting.

As the steam-boat did not quit Fluellen for Lucerne till two o'clock, we had a long morning in this little village, which was made more tedious by heavy and incessant rain. But my waking ears were charmed by a low music ; which I found, on opening the window, to be that of the organ of the church, of which the slender spire rose over a flower-garden directly before me, and in which the villagers were assembled at early mass. The effect, mingling with that of the moist, mild air of the morning, was inexpressibly solemn and sweet ;—it seemed like the breath of all the simple goodness of the valley wafted in one expression. While I still listened, the congregation issued from the

porch; but many of them, chiefly women and children, waited in the churchyard paths, which they lined with rows of bright-coloured umbrellas, until the priest, a tall and reverend-looking man, came out, and, although unprotected even by one of their frail coverings, stopped and shook hands and talked with several, apparently the mothers of the smaller flock;—the most pastoral specimen of a Catholic minister I have ever happened to see in his best aspect. We afterwards availed ourselves of the ever-open doors of the church—which might read a lesson to some of our Deans and Chapters—to examine its interior. It would be very handsome if it were not very gaudy—being covered, through ceiling, walls, and gallery, with paintings—the brightest being figures of the Twelve Apostles in front of the organ-loft, giving it too much the air of a theatrical orchestra, painted for some temporary occasion. A Protestant who respects, as he ought, the Roman Catholic faith, is apt to feel impatient of the taste which disturbs *his* Catholic meditations in the simple church, or even in the stupendous cathedral, by the intermixture of paintings all flaunting with soulless cherubs, or dark with caricatures of physical suffering; and still more when the idea of the Blessed Virgin is embodied in a tawdry doll, frocked in dirty muslin, bedizened with dull spangles and bits of stained glass. But we forget that religion is not the concern only of people of expanded minds or delicate sensibilities; that the untaught or ill-taught mind, which would only shiver back into its own littleness in the vastness of a pictureless cathedral, may be touched through these poor semblances, by pious affections; and that the heart which might be callous to the pure sense of infinite love, may be softened into grateful worship by the frequent exhibition of physical agony. All these, the highest as well as the lowest, are but the aids and appliances by which poor human nature may trace and cleave to something of the everlasting and *unseen*; and, therefore, it may be that these elaborate

trifles, or these shocking representations, have as influential a power over the ignorance and weakness to which they are adapted, as that with which the noblest works of pious ages are imbued for him whose soul they raise to "temples not made with hands, eternal in the heavens."

At two, we embarked in the steam-boat on the lake for Lucerne, in the midst of rain, which prevented any fair appreciation of its beauties, and which entirely veiled the great feature of its vicinity—the fearful Mont Pilatus. Its loftier heights being invisible, I did not think its lower banks, though often of bold rock and always feathered with luxuriant wood, superior to the curving shores of Loch Lomond, or equal to those of Loch Awe, even as seen under similar disadvantages of mist and rain. We reached the Swan at Lucerne at six o'clock; found the table d'hôte had obligingly waited for the steamer; and met, to our agreeable surprise, the friends with whom we had parted at Malines, still on their onward journey. By their advice we went early the next morning to see the Monument to the Swiss Guards who were cut to pieces in August, 1792, defending the royal family of France from the maddened republicans—the Lion of Lucerne and of the world. Although the situation is chosen with a noble daring—the open side of a bare rock, surmounting a still pool of dark water—and the circumstance of the sole figure being sculptured out of that rock arrests the attention of the spectator—yet situation, circumstance, material, all are nothing compared with the expression of the figure itself—the stricken and dying Lion, grasping with its paw, as by instinct, more affecting as it has almost waned to mechanical, the Lily of the Bourbons. There is surely no image in stone or marble of stricken power and beautiful resignation—of fidelity imparting sweetness to death—of true heroic suffering, beyond relief but above despair, so eloquent as this! We should say that it is superior to the occasion which prompted it, if such a work of genius were not truer than our theories. If

I had not seen that patient and dying Lion, I should have thought that, although no form of humanity, that has mastered the fear of death, can ever be without kindred with the heroic, its lowest attributes would suffice for mercenary soldiers, yielding up their lives in pursuance of their bargain with a foreign power; but in the presence of this eloquent testimonial to the dead, I cannot help attributing to them some sympathy with the ancient greatness of the monarchy in whose service they fell; investing their valour with a moral dignity, and their fate with a human interest, which no written history could give them.

After visiting this pathetic stone, we left Lucerne by the diligence for Berne, in pursuance of an improvident consent by which I had ordered letters to be sent thither, in the hope that we might find an "extra week" added to the Eton Holidays. We found, alas! no extra week; but we did not regret this episodial journey, since we met, at "The Falcon," Sir Robert Inglis, who, with his lady, was just entering Switzerland. To meet Sir Robert Inglis in a foreign land is for any English heart to feel proud and happy; to mine it was to feel the distance of countries annihilated as the difference of parties was once in sympathy with one tempered for the serenest enjoyment of that unselfish happiness he diffuses on all around; to rejoice in the sense of a home and homely feelings, of which no country on earth can find a truer representative. Although our interview with him lasted only a few minutes, it was, as his minutes often are, prolific of good; for he introduced us to his relative, Captain B——, who, like ourselves, was homeward-bound, and whose company gladdened that great portion of our remaining journey in which he travelled with us. With him we took the *diligence* at five on the following morning for Basle, travelling through the mighty pass called The Munster Thal—a pass descending through the ranges of the Jura by the side of a bright stream, embraced by lofty pine-clad hills, sometimes contracted almost to the

span of the *Via Mala*, sometimes expanded into green amphitheatres floored with flowery turf; which will be better appreciated, however, on entering Switzerland than on leaving it. The coachman, after we had breakfasted at the foot of the first range, insisted on my seeing the Pass, and almost pulled me up to share his seat, as I was about to enter the carriage; and seemed, while I occupied the elevation to which he raised me, to exult in my enjoyment of the gratification he had (I know not by what instinct or reason) selected me as worthy to enjoy. Our homeward progress was now rapid. We went the next day all the way from Basle to Mannheim—I should think at least two hundred miles, taking the railway to Strasburg; passing through that formidable scene of passports and *douanes*, without a hint of either, to the steamer, with scarcely time to cast one look of reverence on the mighty Minster; and then, by the united force of steam and current, after a long, happy voyage, which I beguiled partly with the conversation of the companion Sir Robert had given me, and partly in the perusal of the "Bubbles from the Brunnens," were landed at Mannheim at eight in the evening. A bill stuck up in the room of our old Hotel, informed us that there was an Opera; and deferring all other refreshment, we found our way into the pit of the theatre before the first act was over. The piece was "The Huguenots," "a bloody piece of work;" which, though well performed in all its parts, had little charm for me, except that it had the form of a drama; but the house itself excited recollections of some of the greatest dramas ever acted; and of the career of the loftiest and purest of all dramatists who have ever lived—Schiller,—whose first and many of whose best plays were produced in this narrow sphere. Here, in this small circle, his first—"The Robbers"—flashed upon the heart of Germany! Was it possible to stand among the crowd of that pit, and not to thrill with the thought of the wonder, the enthusiasm, the intellectual joy of that great

hour? True, it was radiant with the triumphs of the production of early youth—of excited, perturbed, undirected youth—but of a youth whose first "wild and whirling words" were capable of startling the severe constancy of the wisest, and shaking the selfishness of the world. What must have been the sensation of a German audience, on the first representation of a work then warm from its author's heart, and first presented to the hearts of others, the perusal of which forms an era in the mental history of a thinker like Hazlitt, of a philosopher and poet like Coleridge? What must have been the delight of its author, not long emancipated from the severities of a military education, to find his burning thoughts thus reflected back again from the minds of his countrymen? And what must have been the gift of self-regulation, the heroic power of his spirit, which, unseduced by such triumph, should so soon seek its approval, by more just and harmonious conceptions, from the severest wisdom!

Our next day was occupied by the long voyage from Mannheim to Cologne, commencing at six o'clock, and lasting till ten in the evening, our passage being rendered slower by the immense freight of Germans taken on board at various points, all proceeding to a great military fête at Cologne, including the King of Wirtemburgh and his enormous carriages. Seeking enjoyment for part of the time in continuing the perusal of Head's delightful work, imbued with additional interest by the neighbourhood of the scenes he so charmingly delineates, I was surprised and grieved to peruse his elaborate attack on classical learning, as the chief object of education at our great English schools, and on the studies of the university which follow it. The pretty exhibition of a school at the scene of "The Serpent's Bath,"—a name of odious fascination—seems to have awakened in his accomplished mind an admiration for the Nassau system, at the expense of our own, which I lamented in proportion to my respect for our accuser. I was the less

prepared for his enthusiasm of invective, because in an earlier part of his work he had expatiated with pride, so graceful in his assumed character of an old man, on the symbols of moral and intellectual nobleness presented in the appearance of a party of young English collegians, specimens of the operation of the system which he deprecates—in comparison with that of their fellow-voyagers, who have been fashioned under that which he prefers.* Indeed, after having inveighed against the whole tenor of classical scholastic education, he admits "that in spite of all its disadvantages, a set of high-minded, noble-spirited young men eventually become an honour to their country," but asserts, that "this is no proof that their early education had not done all in its power to prevent them." I do not understand what other proof can be required or given; or why, while the fact exists, any apprehension should be entertained of the advance of other classes of society in branches of knowledge now within their sphere of opportunity, and the scope of their actual use. If, indeed, classical instruction taught no more than an intimate acquaintance with the dead languages, and a fine perception of the beauties of the greatest works of ancient genius, surely such results would not follow the devotion of a large portion of studious boyhood to its labours. It is not for these accomplishments chiefly that it is selected for the first place in education; it is because experience has shown it to afford the best means of training the young mind to patient, continuous, unruffled habits of toil—because the study of words, especially of exquisite

* "As we proceeded up the Rhine, there issued from one of the old romantic castles we were passing, a party of young English lads, whose appearance (as soon as they came on board), did ample justice to their country; and comparing them while they walked the deck with the rest of their fellow-prisoners, I could not help fancying that I saw a determination in their step, a latent character in their attitudes, and a vigour in their young frames, which being interpreted, said—

'We dare do all that may become a man,
Who dares do more is none.'

Besides these young collegians," &c.

words, is the best introduction to the knowledge of things—because it does *not*, in the first instance, apply to the faculty of unripe reason, which is better developed and strengthened when it can be exercised on knowledge already mastered, than when incited to try its unfledged energies amidst "worlds not realised;" but to strengthen the memory, to refine the taste, and to form the habit of obedient and cheerful toil. It is because the knowledge it communicates is *not* what is called "*useful*"—because it does *not* supply the scholar with some information at once to be brought into productive exercise, of which he may be "justly vain," and with which he may rest contented—that it is wisely presented, as a succession of difficulties to be surmounted by years of study, though cheered on the way by glimpses of the beautiful and sublime; disturbed by no controversial strifes; but giving to the labours of boyhood a harmony and a substance, and teaching at the same time, that there are higher and nobler things in life to be cherished than those which tend to its outward convenience and enrichment; nay, that there are things compared to which life itself, with all its utilities, is worthless. Our English Classic (for such unquestionably the author is) laments his own lot as having left a classical school at the age of fourteen—"Scarcely knowing the name of a single river in the new world—tired almost to death of the history of the Ilissus. In after-life (he continues) I entered a river of America more than five times as broad as from Dover to Calais—and with respect to the Ilissus, which had received in my mind such distorted importance; I will only say, that I have repeatedly walked across it in about twenty seconds without wetting my ankles." Surely our accomplished author recognises a strange scale by which to estimate the value of a knowledge of rivers in the opening or matured mind! While he probably owes much, however unconsciously, of that graceful spirit which bubbles up in his style as sparklingly as the fountains he celebrates, to his researches bordering on the

Ilissus, it is difficult to sympathise with his distress in not having learned the names of all the American rivers. Of what earthly use would it be to any English gentleman to know them all as familiarly as Mrs. Malaprop her "parts of speech?" If he visits a river in America, the name of which he happens not to know, he will learn it in a minute from the first backwoodsman who will honour him with a civil answer;—and if he stays at home, what interest has he in the name of a river he will never see, though it should be five times as broad as the sea between Dover and Calais, and should lose in its breadth all the attributes which give to rivers a place in our recollection or fancy! It would be a vast addition to his knowledge to know all the names of all the inhabitants of London and Westminster, with the numbers of their houses, as authentically collected and alphabetically arranged in the Post-Office Directory—information likely to be far more convenient than the recollection of all the names of all the rivers in the new world;—but would it be wise, therefore, to fill the memory with such a nomenclature, rather than with the names of the heroes of the Trojan war, which are indexes to heroic deeds? To know that there *are* rivers in America one hundred miles in breadth, may be well for one whose imagination has power to embrace such a waste of water; but beyond that "great fact," what blessing does a nominal acquaintance confer unless the names are themselves pictures—as "Abbana and Pharphar lucid streams?" If the value of an unseen river to the mind depends on its breadth, Sir Francis Head would prefer by ten thousand fold the St. Lawrence to the Jordan; which he might have passed with as dry though not so contemptuous a foot as the Ilissus; and he may strike the balance of the interest, according to gallons of water, between the muddy flood of the Mississippi, and "Siloa's brook that flow'd fast by the oracle of God."

In assailing the Universities, our author makes as large an admission of the excellence which they "do not prevent,"

as he accords to our schools. "I firmly believe," he says, "that the 1200 students, who at one time are generally at Oxford, are as high-minded, as highly talented, as anxious to improve themselves, as handsome, and, in every sense of the word, as fine a set of lads, as can anywhere be met with in a body on the face of the globe." Again I ask, "what would you have more?" May not you obtain less? What is the complaint against the University so potent that it prevents the application of the scriptural rule, "by their fruits ye shall know them"? "Arriving at Oxford, they find a splendid High Street, *magnificently illuminated* with gas, *filled with handsome shops, traversed by the mail, macadamized*, and like every other part of our great commercial country, *beaming with modern intelligence*. In this street, however, they *are not permitted to reside*, but conducted to the right and the left, they meander among mouldering monastic-looking buildings, until they reach the cloisters of the particular college to which they are *sentenced* to belong. By an ill-judged misnomer, they are from this moment encouraged, even by their preceptors, to call each other men, and a *man* of seventeen, too tall for school, talks of another man of eighteen as gravely, as I always mention the name of my prototype Methusalem." Now, without pausing to inquire whether the substitution of all sorts of miscellaneous information for the discipline of classical instruction will tend to prevent the assumption of mannish airs in adolescence; or to examine the results of that Prussian compulsive education which our author desiderates, in converting docile boys into conceited little men, long before the commencement of English University life, —I may venture to express my astonishment at the description given of the High Street of Oxford, and the lamentation that the collegians, not permitted to reside amidst its "handsome shops," are sentenced to take up their abode in some monastic-looking college. The description of the "stream-like wanderings of that glorious street," is appli-

cable, if at all, only to part of it; and what would that part be but for the "monastic-looking buildings" that glorify its continuation, and redeem its commercial beginning from the insignificance of a street of respectable shops in a country town? And does a true English writer really think that it would be better for a young man to live in such a street as he fancies this—at best, a very inferior Cheapside—than in the sequestered beauty of one of those buildings, which Time has been charmed to spare; in which the loveliness of nature has striven with the graces of art, and the influence of years, to endow fit birthplaces for immortal thoughts? Does he think that there is nothing in the hopes that are there excited; in the friendships that are there born; in the principles that are there instilled; in the veneration for greatness and the love for goodness which are there induced, tending to that result which he admits; and that when he enumerates the mere subjects of formal examination, he truly *catalogues* the blessings which the University confers? Can he even look at the Colleges of Oxford, trace their histories, learn that they have gradually arisen—hall by hall—from small and humble lodgings for poor scholars, and have been increased, and adorned and enriched, by the successive piety and affection of ages; yet see them now grouped into a whole, which rather seems to be the embodiment of some one exquisite sentiment springing from a single mind, and developed in harmonious beauty, like a flower expanding, veined and streaked from the principle of loveliness within it, than the gift of various benefactors, and the work of various architects in different times, without acknowledging that it is an offspring of the love of learning and the feeling of beauty, and the reverence for the good and the great, which forms a glorious part of the national character of England, and has thus sprung and blossomed, and ripened here! What should we think, even of a foreigner, visiting Oxford for mere curiosity, who should turn with disgust from its Colleges—monastic-looking buildings

—in which the students are "sentenced" to reside, but dwell with fond admiration upon its streets, as "beaming with modern intelligence"—"macadamised"—filled "with handsome shops"—and "traversed by the mail"?

There was much in this (to me) extraordinary attack on our educational system, as I read it, among some of the disciples of the system whose excellence inspired it, which made me almost suspect, as I read, that the edition had not only been printed by foreign cupidity, but interpolated by foreign taste. I was perplexed to find an English gentleman prophesying that "if our aristocracy, *with the Goul's horrid taste*, will obstinately feed itself on dead languages, while the lower classes are greedily digesting fresh, wholesome food," the lower orders will be governed no longer "by classical statesmen;" and to see him asserting, that against popular discontents "our simple and only remedy is, by resolutely breaking up the system of our public schools and universities, to show the people that we have nobly determined to become enlightened too;" that is, to become land-measurers, arithmeticians, "chemists, and buffoons;" with a smattering of a hundred things, a knowledge of few, and the conceit of knowing all.

I participate in no such apprehensions. On the contrary, it is delightful to see the influences of classical learning not fading upwards, but penetrating downwards, and masses of the people rejoicing to recognise even from afar the skirts of its glory. The name of that famous stream, to which Sir Francis Head reverts with so much contempt, happily pronounced before thousands at Manchester, at the last anniversary of its Athenæum, by a man of genius capable of embracing the highest associations and of sympathising with the lowliest, instead of exciting scorn, tended to heighten the effect of a generous endeavour to dignify and to refine those which are surrounded by care and engrossed by labour; and who were delighted to grow conscious in the eloquence of Mr. D'Israeli and his friends of veins of

sympathy opening between their own busy lives and those which happier leisure had adorned with a more serene knowledge of immortal things.

We slept at the Hotel of the Rhine, and found very preferable accommodations to those we had formerly sought on the other side of the river, and in a far more convenient situation, both for arrival and departure. After an early glimpse of the cathedral, we left Cologne by the railway for Liége—travelled thence, partly by railway and partly by carriage, to Aix-la-Chapelle; and went thence partly by railway and *diligence*, to Liége, where we slept; thence we proceeded by train to Antwerp, retracing our old ground without any fresh adventure, and arrived on the 7th of September, in time to enter on board our old ship the Antwerpen; made a swift and smooth passage to London, and reached home on the 8th of September; after a detention of two hours at our own Custom-house, before the examination of our two small bags could be obtained (which, being obtained, lasted just two seconds), during which time we had the opportunity of learning—in the miseries inflicted by our Lords Commissioners on foreigners landing in London—a lesson of more humiliation for our country than all we had seen abroad had taught us.

As far as a rapid excursion, ungraced by female society, can be delightful, ours was crowned with decided success—full of great memories lasting as life. Its want—that of mountains of snow and ice—was a disappointment at the time; for we seemed to have twice passed the Alps without seeing them; and our only splendid view of the snowy wonders of the world was the distant panorama of Berne. How far this is really a subject of regret, is one on which I may hazard a few considerations at the close of my continental rambles. Of our two passages of the Alps, I think that of the St. Gothard the finest; for the supremacy of the *Via Malà* over the most terrible part of the descent of the Reuss is to me doubtful; while the superiority of the

course of the Ticino above the descent from Splugen to Chiavenna is beyond all question. Indeed I doubt (without prejudice to the claims of our own Wye) whether the Ticino, in substance and form—that is, in its water, and its channel—is not the loveliest river of the Old World; and I am ready to depose to my belief that it is worth all the ocean streams of the New. There is also this remarkable beauty of the St. Gothard Pass—more remarkable in recollection than in enjoyment—that it consists simply of the courses of two rivers: the Reuss leads you to Switzerland, the Ticino to Italy; and every picture of grandeur or beauty by the way has its own river for its "secret remembrancer." Who amidst such aspiring labour or such headlong pleasure could wish for a happier artificial memory than is supplied by the courses of these rivers?

PART III.

CHAMOUNI REVISITED;

WITH THE

ATTEMPTED ASCENT OF MONT BLANC.

AUGUST—SEPTEMBER.

1843.

CHAMOUNI REVISITED.

PART III.

CHAPTER I.

JOURNEY FROM LONDON TO BERNE.

Voyage to Antwerp—Journey from Antwerp to Cologne—Arrival at Cologne at night—Engagement with the Cologne Company for the Voyage to and from Strasburg—Voyage to Coblentz—Ehrenbreitstein and its Cannon Balls—A Night Serenade at Coblentz—Voyage to Strasburg, with a Night on the Rhine—Interior of Strasburg Minster—Best course for entering Switzerland—Progress arrested at Basle—Evening Passage through the Munster Thal to Moutiers—Journey from Moutiers to Berne.

As the valley of Chamouni, of all the places I had seen abroad, left the largest and the most vivid impression on my memory; and as at my first visit I had too hastily quitted it, and last summer had been tempted altogether to omit it from my scheme, I purposed this vacation to make it and myself amends, by regarding it as the chief object of my tour, and spending some days in acquiring a familiarity with its grandeurs. As my party now was the same as had shared my first visit to the Alps, and as we then approached Geneva by the route of Paris, we chose the longer course, by the Rhine, in which we traversed much of the course taken by my son and myself last year; and which, though not diminished in interest to *me* by previous knowledge, must be but slightly sketched for the benefit of others. We left London in our old acquaintance, "The Antwerpen," at mid-day, on 28th August; reached Antwerp after a smooth,

but not so glorious a passage as that of last year, about the same early hour: expatiated in the Cathedral; dined not riotously, as last year, but pleasantly; and reached Liége at night, with no annoyance, except the endurance of the inevitable miseries of the omnibus between the station and the hotel. The only addition we made to our Antwerpian experiences, was the antique majesty of the church of St. James—an exterior more simply impressive than that of the cathedral, because wearing an air of greater massiveness, and wanting the airy elegance of the tower, which, while it fills the sense with an angelical loveliness, dissipates all severer thoughts—and an interior more rich in monumental remains—rich, above all, in embracing the tomb of Rubens. Our way from Liége being by the railway, now open to Verviers, was through the narrow winding valleys, which disclose a long succession of brushwood-clad rocks, like miniatures of the banks of North Wales; and so happily escaped the jolting and dusting of the old flint-paved, dust-bordered terrace, which will soon torment mankind no more —one of the few roads made desolate by railways, from which we may part without sorrow. At Verviers we found *voitures* waiting, so we bade a gay defiance to the omnibus, to which a multitude of our fellow-passengers were condemned; and, although drawn by very un-English horses, reached Aix-la-Chapelle without incident, except a detention at the Prussian Barrier, while the Custom-house officers did *not* search our packages.

We arrived at the hotel of the "Four Seasons," in good time for its *table d'hôte* dinner of two o'clock, excellent while it lasted, but which left a long interval before the starting of the train for Cologne at six. As our good old-fashioned custom of enjoying a social repose after dinner, with the pleasant accompaniments of decanters and glasses, is not only barbarous, but impossible on the Continent, where, as soon as the long and luxurious meal is concluded, every one starts up as if the business of an empire was waiting, we

found ourselves literally turned out, soon after three o'clock, to seek amusement for three hours of a sultry afternoon. Fortunately, we recollected a small grove of trees, just beyond one of the city gates—a shady oasis, between two ascending roads, where, two years ago, we had seen and heard some small Prussian drummer-lads taught to beat time merrily on the drum; and there lounged among the roots of fir-trees, making their shades our drawing-room, till the hour of departure approached. It was dark long before we reached the Station at Cologne; where, escaping from the confusion of the omnibuses, we were tempted to try to wind our own way to the Hotel of the Rhine, and soon repented of our rashness. We first found ourselves in a long, dismal avenue of lofty trees, with the uncertain gleam of water below us; then in deeper gloom, beneath the battlements of the City gates, and winding among the silent walls of the fortifications; then emerging into a long, narrow, spectral street, the darkness and stillness of which made us shiver, and quicken our pace as much as our burthens would allow. Long did we wander in the wilderness of Cologne, shelving down as we thought, almost headlong, to the Rhine, near which the Hotel of our destination was situate, only to find ourselves on the other side of the City, till at last we met a guide, who conducted us to the Rhine Hotel, where we consoled ourselves with consolidated tea and supper. We had also the consolation of finding some of our fellow-passengers, who had availed themselves of all the appliances of the Station, behind us; for they had been carried about to various other hotels, which were full; and came after us, poor silly wanderers, to take such accommodations as our previous choice had left them.

Morning opened—I can scarcely say dawned—in heavy rain; but although it damped, it did not change our purpose of proceeding up the Rhine to Strasburg; and we were right in our constancy, for the rain subsided during this day; quite vanished the next morning; and left us in full

enjoyment of the luxury of almost cloudless sunshine during the residue of our tour. I believe it is a wise rule, admitting, like all good rules, of many exceptions, to proceed with your purpose, however essential the sunshine may be to its felicitous accomplishment, without any regard to the weather you start in; for although, time out of mind, the weather has been notorious for an aptitude of disappointing all pleasurable plans dependent upon its favours, it is still more inclined to double the annoyance by clearing up as soon as your opportunity is lost; so the best way to defeat its waywardness is to treat it with haughty disregard. As I was standing at the Hotel-gate, keeping watch over our effects, prepared for transmission to the Rhine, I was accosted by a most disinterested friend to strangers, who, after inquiring whether I proposed to leave Cologne by the morning boat, assured me that it was absolutely necessary to procure tickets for the voyage before starting, and most kindly offered to conduct me to the proper office to procure them. Although I doubted whether a regulation so stringent had been made, and whether the production of a proper number of Napoleons even on board the steamer might not have averted Jonah's fate from us, still—as the statement might be true, and the matter was imminent, I dashed with him through the rain to the office of the Cologne Company, beside the river. By some strange felicity, he grew suddenly familiar with the officials there; told them the number of which my party consisted, as if he knew it by intuition; and strongly enforced the advice which the clerk gave, that we should not merely take our tickets for Coblentz, as I had proposed, but all the way to Strasburg—and not *to* Strasburg only, but back again to Cologne—and his perseverance was crowned with perfect success; for, having no time to deliberate, and being half convinced of the cheapness of the arrangement, and half glad to resign all the power and the weakness of free will as to the course of return, I gave up myself and party to the Cologne Company, "for better and

for worse ; " paid the reasonable price of 220 francs for each for the outward and homeward voyage ; and received in return tickets amounting to a contract of insurance, to Strasburg and back, with liberty to touch and stop at all ports and places—to go as rapidly or as slowly as I pleased —and to leave, join, and rejoin, any of the company's vessels, at any place and any time within the season. I am bound to say that, except in a minor article of an *unvisèd* passage through Strasburg, the contract was faithfully performed ; and would recommend a similar engagement to any one who has made up his mind as to his homeward course—and who would rather not be tempted to change it. My unknown friend, who had consigned me and mine thus suddenly to Strasburg, did not wait even for thanks, but vanished as soon as he saw the bargain completed ; an instance of disinterestedness it is right to record. He could have no motive for serving me, but as one of the human race ; whether he had any object less refined in relation to the Cologne Company, I must leave as matter of conjecture to those who are obstinately bent on the idle search of motives for actions.

It seemed a melancholy thing at first, to be confined in a small steam-boat, at seven o'clock in the morning, wet through from the preliminary passages ; in a dense rain ; launched on the Rhine in search of pleasure and the picturesque ; but by making the best of matters, we soon found them tolerable ; then hopeful ; then charming. Breakfast, judiciously deferred for the steamer, and now liberally ordered by our youngest appetite, amused the first hour ; the next was lightened by watching through our small windows the effects of the steamboat and the rain on the river, which seemed to be cut into pieces of slate-coloured satin or sarsenet, and spotted by millions of drops ; the third in trying to discover the banks, which the slowly receding mists promised to reveal, and in reflecting that they would not be worth seeing if they appeared ; until, as we

approached Bonn, the rain diminished so much as to allow of our walking the deck, in time to see the clouds roll away from the Drachenfells and leave them standing clear, solemnised by that dark purple tinge which the retreating showers leave on the hills. They were finer, however, in the retrospect than in the approach ; for the nearest mountain, when passed, seemed to rise precipitately from the water, which looked bound in by the land on all sides in a lake before it, and now softly green, reflected its crested majesty on the clear gliding mirror. The weather continued to exhibit a pretty fickleness—cloud, and shower, and gleam —till we reached Coblentz at five o'clock; and found accommodation and comfort at the Giant, although two sentinels, lounging over their muskets, at the door, indicated that it was honoured with the presence of a Prussian General.

Although the evening was moist and showery, we crossed the Bridge of Boats to Ehrenbreitstein ; passed through a long outer court of the fortress unchallenged ; and took refuge from a shower in the mouth of one of its caverns, whence subterraneous but ascending passages lead to its higher galleries. Below us lay, in iron, unmitigated by moss or rust, horribly bright for carnage, thousands of cannon-balls ; while around and above us the rocks and rock-like fortifications mortised into them, were gradually yielding their stiff, cold, formal, warlike fronts to the weather-stains, the lichens, the bird-sown shrubs—all the soft approaches of green. There lay the most destructive implements of war, ready for immediate service ; here breathed the gentlest teachings of peace, not in lessons of prim Quaker formality, but expressed by "nature's own sweet and cunning hand," stealing away the aspects of hostility from Europe's strongest fortress : as, if it were shattered or decayed, she would beautify its ruins. Best of peacemakers ! Her wisdom is penetrating the mailed breast of Prussia ; and may find even there an echo to my wish that those balls may lie and rust, till they shall

harmonise in dull colour with the grass-green heights above them!

We retired early to rest, as we were bound to pursue our journey at six o'clock on the morrow; but our sleep was strangely (I cannot say rudely), broken or averted. Occupying a front chamber, very far uplifted in our Giant mansion, I could just discern as I lay, through an open window, the furthest water of the Rhine glistening gently by its waterish moonlight; and it was just beginning to mingle with some dream of "Alph, the sacred river," when a strain aroused me—not at all "like the faint exquisite music of a dream," but a real substantial sound from a number of stout voices, chanting or singing in tremendous chorus. This drew me to the window, when—far below me on the terrace, which runs along the line of hotels confronting the river—I discovered a narrow row of tables, with benches on each side, like the dinner tables of a Sunday-school anniversary, covered with music books, over which, by the light of some twenty tall tallow dips, which flared magnificently into the darkness, two rows of dingy-looking young men were bending, who instantly jerked up their heads in unison, and renewed the chorus. It was no other than "Young Coblentz"—such of the sons and apprentices of the patriot citizens as had voices and skill to use them—assembled to give a serenade in honour of the distinguished officer who lodged at the hotel. Anon, the singing paused—loud huzzas, accompanied by the waving of sticks and caps in the murky air, followed—and then all was so still that you could hear the ripple of the Rhine. The General had recognised the sweet voices of the civic enthusiasts, and appeared, or rather presented himself in the small balcony of his apartment just below me. He made a speech—I have no doubt "neat and appropriate," as it was unquestionably short—and concluded with the emphatical enunciation of the word "Coblentz," which produced three rounds of huzzas and "one cheer more."

The serenade was now resumed — one piece was lustily performed—and the music books were just adjusted and the voices raised for a second, when down rushed a torrent of envious rain like a water-spout, and struck the lines of musicians into dripping and shivering groups, and the lights into sudden darkness. I retired from the window thinking that all was over ; but before I could quite reach oblivion, I heard once more the patriotic music "piercing the night's dull ear," which was now at its very dullest, forcing a desperate way upwards as if it was muffled yet resolved—and, on thrusting my head once more out into the rain, beheld, where lately the candles had flared, a long double row of umbrellas, beneath which the undaunted vocalists had rallied, sheltering their music books and candles ; and which, being of various colours, looked like a tessellated pavement strangely illuminated from below, on which the elements beat in vain, or like some sea-caves in which *mermen* were chanting. The vision of the umbrellas did not however, last long ; the music, after reminding me of Mr. Dismal's hilarious contribution to the late Mr. Matthews' "Nightingale Club," stopped ; whether the General, contented with the gratification lavished on his nocturnal hours, intimated that enough had been done for glory, or whether the patriotic fire burned itself out, I know not ; but the songsters gave a cheer to the tune of a shriek, and dispersed —having, as the *garçon* next morning assured us, scarcely commenced the serenade they had rehearsed—and left the General, and us, and the world, at peace.

At six we were again on the river, in the midst of a faint drizzle, which soon ceased, and was followed by the first of a succession of glorious days. Slowly—in happier state than that of Cleopatra on the Cydnus, because impelled by a mightier slave than all her rowers—we were borne through the great gorge of the Rhine, recognising now each successive rock and castle as an old acquaintance, breathing of happy hours ; then through its expanse of waters, some-

times relieved by the perplexity of island-bound reaches, till the long hours of darkness came on, longer than usual, before we reached Mannheim, as a strong wind blew against us. We felt these, however, the less irksome, because we were not looking out with a vain impatience for the lights of Mannheim, as when they glimmered, they glimmered not for us; for "bent on speed," with Chamouni in the distance, we accepted the option offered us of proceeding through the night, in a narrow and sharp steamer, formed to cut its way through the shallows, which would start on our arrival, and which, we were assured, would land us at Strasburg on the following evening, in time for the last train for Basle; and, as the power of the Cologne Company was vouched to carry us through its formidable passages *unvisèd*, and unsearched of justice, we should ere night thus achieve a marvellous progress. Although the last promise was not fulfilled, we found no reason to regret our choice; to go to bed at twelve o'clock, even at the Hôtel de l'Europe, to rise at four, would have been a mere variety of unrest, more tantalizing than that which we preferred; and then we should spend the night in diminishing, however slowly, the distance between us and the enchanted land of our destiny. At Mannheim we were, amidst a brief and dark confusion, with a few passengers as wise or as impatient as ourselves, decanted into the small steamer. As fortunately there was no withered piece of once female humanity, with the rank of a German Princess on board, the ladies were accommodated with sofas in the pretty nest, called "The Pavilion," while the male voyagers bivouacked in the saloon, each embracing his carpet-bag for his pillow, ready in a moment to defend purse and passport against any river attorney who might practise upon these lone waters. Notwithstanding the uneasiness of the position, I obtained some "twinklings of oblivion," but heartily did I rejoice to see the cold grey light through the one small pane of side-glass left unblinded, and stumbled my dangerous way

over the bodies of prostrate sleepers—which Lady Macbeth herself would scarcely have ventured to assert were "but as pictures"—and achieved the freedom of the deck, and the blessing of pure air. The moonlight was still blended with the tints of dawn; at first the low white mist allowed only a small circle of the water to be explored, but soon the bushes of a long island, near which we were proceeding, showed their green branches through it; and a poplar's topmost tracery, at a distance pierced the fog, and exulted in the pale sky. The mists, retreating, breaking, uprising, dispersing; sometimes cleaving to a bit of foliage, as if reluctant to loose their slight individuality; sometimes refining and vanishing in the sky, as if happy to be so exhaled, leaving one thin wayward fleece, hesitating between earth and heaven, gave perpetual employment to the eye, before the river and its banks were fully disclosed in the brightness of the assured daylight. It was a delicious morning; its breath a freshness I had never felt till now, far beyond (I should think) the "freshness of a dream," by which any but a poet great as Wordsworth could be visited; and which, having found some rude appliances of ablution, I had scarcely hoped for on board a German steamer, I was perhaps disposed to enjoy the more, from the slight fever of short and imperfect rest, and the contrast with the questionable atmosphere of the cabin. However this may be, it was thorough enjoyment; nor did it diminish when the fancy-winging throng of vapours disappeared, and the great field of water and air expanded in the "light of common day." We were slowly moving up the broad bosom of the Rhine; here unromantic, "unhonoured and unsung," but presenting scenes of soft, touching, solitary beauty. Its banks were uniformly flat—nearly level with its wide stream, which sometimes eddied round a tuft of osiers, set like a flower-bed within it; sometimes glided beneath a grove of thinly-clustered trees, the front stems all silvery in the sun, those seen within sinking into variety of dusk, and

the topmost leaves glistening with gold; sometimes bordered by a thickly-matted copse, with here and there the opening as of a wood-walk, carrying the thought far into some unpretending scene of sylvan repose; sometimes working its way beneath the roots of a stately line of poplars, which it at once nourished and undermined; sometimes divided by a long low island, fringed with tall purple flowers, inviting yet defying human grasp; sometimes perplexing the view by a side-long avenue of water, like another river meeting it, and afterwards claiming it for its own; and thus, not now bound in by those huge barriers of hills and rocks which limit its progress, while they attest its strength, is here more decidedly lord of the scene; making its way through a yielding soil "at its own sweet will," among woods and banks ready to melt into it, while, at distance, the pink streaks of the eastern sky seemed to touch and crown it with celestial hues, as I have seen fragments of rainbows float on the broad bosom of Loch Lomond. In the mere idle desire of progress, which we cherish in the pleasantest journey—by an instinct which shows that our rest is not to be found even in the most blessed passages of this life—I repeatedly fixed my eyes on a line of poplars four or five miles off, at the edge of the extreme view, as a point in our voyage, and then so melted down the intervening hour to minutes in pleasant thought, that I started to find the lucid expanse past, and the poplars close to us. At length a bridge of boats, gradually becoming distinct, added a human interest to the watery perspective; which we found to mark the boundary between the dominions of Baden and France, at the spot where voyagers land who are destined to Carlsruhe. At the bridge we were detained half an hour, on some matter of mere dancing-master ceremony observed between the two Powers; the flag of France was waving to our right hand, but no flag of Baden answered it: and we were told that the boat would not pass till that signal gave it permission. The official whose high

duty it was to hoist it had not risen, or chose to make us sensible of the power of the small State under which he was a small stipendiary; so we waited, not impatiently but somewhat curiously, until a pretty striped flag streamed aloft, when the bridge opened, and the steam-boat glided through it. The voyage soon increased in interest, for while the shores still presented only their low fringes of wood and coppice, the distance on the left was enriched by the outlines of the mountains of the Black Forest, so spiritualized by the light vapours which the sun drew up, as to seem fit region for the wildest and most graceful of romantic conceptions. When dinner, in due time, was served on deck, beneath an awning, to our small party, and we had taken our seats fronting the mountain range, I felt our position one of unequalled luxury:—shaded from the noontide sun; gently gliding along the bright and brimming river; light airs playing round us; a silver plain of water for our foreground; beyond it, rich pastures, like a grass-plat, dotted with trees; and far beyond the vision of the mountains—no evanescent picture swiftly floated by, but kept in full view, unchanged for hours, except as the clouds shifted their large shadows on the plain, or the mists disclosed some rounded top or brown descent of the hills, in sudden distinctness; and the pleasure enhanced by that lassitude which the broken rest of the night, and the heat of the day produced, and which disposed the mind and body to the perfect enjoyment of indolent luxury!

As the sun declined and the lights on the river grew richer and mellower, our assurance that we should land in time for the train for Basle, and pass through Strasburg as free as if the Royal Albert and Victoria had borne us, began to dwindle to hope; hope sank with the sun to bare possibility, and gave place to despair, long before its setting; we foresaw a night at Strasburg, and grim shapes of custom-house officers, and whiskered guards began to rise before us. Some of our companions proposed to avert these evils

by landing at Kehl in the Baden territory; but while we were deliberating on the prudence of following their example, the steamer decided for all; for instead of holding its course up the stream to the bridge, which was in sight, it turned to the right into a huge canal, and steamed up it among wharfs and villas, and the backs of gaunt houses; but interspersed everywhere with glowing vegetation, into the very heart of Strasburg, where the custom-house officers inspected our baggage—very lightly and graciously, however—and where our passport was required and given. As an omnibus bearing the name of our old quarters, the Hôtel La Fleur, was waiting among others, whose conductors must have anticipated the unexpected lateness of the steamer, and the sudden necessity that compelled it thus to belie the promises of its owners, we entered it, and were soon welcomed by our host of 1840 to newly painted and newly furnished chambers. We did not wait, however, longer than was necessary to secure our rooms and order tea; but hurried to the cathedral, in hope to reach it before its time of closing should arrive. We were too late for its hours of worship; its doors were locked; and though they were speedily expanded at the application of the universal talisman, we felt, on entering the glorious pile, the painful difference between the great church, freely open to all worshippers, and all who, entering mere admirers, might be raised or awed into worship, and the splendid show exhibited by a mercenary guide. Instead of sharing or trying to share in the pieties of the evening service; or catching a sense of devotion from the bowed head of some poor rapt adorer, we saw the aisles and altars irradiated by the evening sunbeams which streamed through the painted window in richest and *thickest* light; but the place was less hallowed than enchanted. We were conducted through the routine of all the curiosities, a process destructive of all great sentiment: and, among these, the clock, the most famous in the world—except Master Humphrey's. It is a

mere foolish toy, comprising several pieces of unmeaning mechanism, by one of which it shows the day of the month as well as any penny almanack, and by another sends out twelve figures of the apostles when it strikes certain hours ; and does various other things fit to amuse a child in a fitting place, but quite unworthy of its holy station. Our detention at Strasburg did not prove a serious evil ; for we obtained our passport duly *viséd* as soon as we regained the inn ; enjoyed our tea and some other associated comforts before an early retirement to rest ; felt ourselves in some measure at home, for though we missed our pleasant English-speaking *garçon*, who had migrated to Geneva, we were cordially recognised by the landlord, who sent us to the railway station, three miles from the city gates, in his own private carriage. Starting thence at seven in the morning we reached Basle by twelve, in time to join the *table d'hôte* dinner at a good, though homely inn, called "The Cigogne," to which we had been conveyed by its own attendant omnibus, and to engage a *voiturier*, who undertook to start with us forthwith on the way to Berne, through the majestic pass of the Munster Thal (which having seen myself I was anxious to show to my fair companions), and to deposit us at the end of our journey on the next evening.

When we took our seats in the open carriage at half-past two, under a cloudless sky, commencing our travels on Swiss ground, I exulted that the labour of the journey was past, and that henceforth all our travels would be, not in search of pleasure, but in its perpetual enjoyment ; and yet how little alloy had mingled with the happiness of the past way, beyond the short fatigue which sweetens refreshment and repose ! I think the course which we adopted in this visit to Switzerland is by far the best for entering it ; presenting in the happiest gradation, and with the best pauses and intermixtures, the beautiful, romantic, wild, grand, sublime. The Rhine, surveyed from the labouring steamer, is the smoothest, serenest, and most silent of highways ; at

first a mere body of living water, it steals away as it glides the feverish vestiges of the year's anxiety and disappointment, "and all that is at enmity with joy;" and steadies the mind to receive, as in a mirror, all the glorious images that await it. The romantic passages which follow, between Bonn and Bingen, feed the desire of beauty without overwhelming it; their mirrored ruins fill with calm suggestions of long-past time the spirit which has just cast off the dominion of worldly cares; the distant apparition of the clustered hills of the Black Forest excites without ruffling the fancy, and nourishes the love of mountains by the unclothed simplicity of the forms which the mists unveil; till the embodied piety of Strasburg Minster sheds a sacredness upon all things. The railway transition from Strasburg to Basle is a mere parenthesis—so rapid, that if its attendant scenery does not heighten the mood for appreciating Swiss greatness, it does not disturb it; and then comes the Munster Thal, the solemn vestibule to the World's Palace, grand in itself, and opening to the most expanded view of its distant wonders, and that which best prepares the stranger for a nearer acquaintance with them. By proceeding through German cities, as Carlsruhe, Frankfort, Heidelberg, and still more by preliminary visits to watering-places, as Baden or Wiesbaden, the mind is dissipated among other interests and associations which, in proportion as they are captivating in themselves, relax its power of grasping the images of the Alps. By crossing France to Geneva, and catching sight of Mont Blanc and its subject Alps from the brink of the Jura, the traveller is startled by an effect more sudden and amazing—the contrast between the dusty flatness of France and the airy splendour of snows uplifted into the skies; but even if the caprice of the weather should allow him to enjoy the contrast in perfection, still it is contrast that perturbs, not harmony that fills and satisfies; nor has the eye or the mind been educated to receive or to appreciate the new nature thus poured upon them.

At the outset of our Swiss career, we met with a slight hindrance, which, at the time, puzzled more than it amused us. About a quarter of a mile beyond the gate of Basle, at a point whence two great roads diverge, stands—as all the world ought to know, but as we were not then aware—a cross, on a little elevation, commemorative of the bravery and destruction of a small band of Swiss, who, in 1444, resisted the army of France ten times its number, until all but ten were slain—a spot worthy to be regarded as the Swiss Thermopylæ. The mound was now begirt by a motley crowd; and, on approaching, we saw ranged along its brow a row of lads, of all sizes, apparently between the ages of ten and eighteen, dressed in hussar jackets and white trousers; some with muskets, some with pikes, some with musical instruments; not very orderly, but very merry; whom we supposed to be the pupils of a great school, playing at soldiers. It was, however, a more serious matter; for our driver stopped, though the crowd was not dense, and showed no disposition to obstruct our passage; and remained staring, regardless of our entreaties that he would go on, which possibly he did not understand, and of our gestures, which he could not mistake; and presently left us and his horses unattended, while he placed his hands in his pockets and mingled with the crowd, and thus made us enforced, and rather alarmed, witnesses of the proceeding. A gentleman in black came forward, at the head of the young patriots, looking like their schoolmaster, and made a speech to the crowd—short, but vehemently gesticulated—yet, strange to say, it was productive of no applause. Its termination, however, was hailed by us with satisfaction; because our driver returned, and slowly resumed his seat, just as we were on the point of removing our luggage from the vehicle and returning to the City, as our only mode of extrication from the imminent peril of being left in the midst of a crowd at the mercy of Swiss horses. He drove slowly on through the people, who made way for us without objection; and we went on without

receiving any information respecting the occasion of our stoppage. I suppose, from what I have subsequently read, that it was a celebration of the anniversary of the battle; but why the Swiss heroes were represented only by such juvenile performers is still a mystery.

Beauty waited on us with deepening colours till nightfall. Our road, bordered only by fruit-trees, first wound through open meadows edging the Birs; the pure sparkling stream, whose magnificent domain we were about to ascend, almost from its confluence with the Rhine—lucid recipient of a hundred lovely streams—to its highest source. We approached the low-wooded hills, the outskirts of the Jura bathed now in full sunshine, which opened to receive our road, forming around it a succession of verdant amphitheatres, connected by narrow alleys, all bright with the liveliest green, along the level floor of which the clear river glided. As the evening light thickened, the road grew lovelier; the glens became ravines, built up with dark rocks; and we regretted to learn our driver's determination to proceed in the dark, after a rest of half-an-hour at a pretty village, as we were approaching the wildest and noblest depths of the Pass. I do not think, however, that we have reason to deplore the dogged determination which he evinced to proceed as far as Moutiers; for the glens of the Thal, which I had seen in day, were more awful, and hardly less lovely, in the darkness. Although we could not *see* the transition from the beach, the coppice-wood, and the birch to the firs and pines, we *felt* it; deep defile after deep defile opened and closed around us, sometimes shutting us in so close, that the road and river occupied the whole floor of the Pass; and the sides rose up towards the dark blue sky, looking perpendicular; while, on the highest tops, a pine or poplar often spread out its tracery, as if among the stars. They sparkled above the narrow orifice; but earth had lights which matched those in lustre—glow-worms of exquisite beauty, illustrating the sternest passages of the way.

Sometimes we came close to one of those globes of green light, meekly resting in the thick grass which fringed the road and the stream;—sometimes a small cluster of them forming a constellation glistened far up on a crag, or at the base of a rocky pillar, breaking out from the side of the precipice; sometimes across the river, amidst the scarce-discerned roots of shaggy pines, a single lamp shone out in heavenly serenity—a star of earth. F—— gave a pretty solution of these fair problems of Nature, which I should despoil, in repeating, of its gloss, as much as I should one of the insect sparklers, by snatching it from its bed or throne, and bringing it into the blaze of a common lamp, an insignificant brown worm. Its substance was, that the male glow-worm is endowed with wings, which the female wants; and he, too often neglectful of his mate, prolongs the enjoyment of his airy privilege, while she languishes for his return; and that the lonely and loving female, supplied with this lustral power, hangs out her lamp of love, to rekindle his gossamer sympathy, and win and guide him home. The stillness of the night was sometimes violently broken by the heavy sound of work in iron—ponderous noises—and its darkness was displaced by the sudden apparition of a forge, with a huge fire, and grim figures of stalwart workmen, with massive arms, stirring the lumps of flame, or beating the bars of red-hot iron—strange forms to glare in on the loveliness of such a night, reminding us of the charcoal burners of the Hartz Mountains, and things even more fearful; for the depths of the Jura, rich in minerals, are alive with industry, and maintain an energetic and honest population among their folds. In their bosom, but in a wide and fertile circle, which they recede on all sides to form, stands Moutiers—a busy, and for a busy, not dirty town — where we stopped at a large old-fashioned inn; found good tea, cold meat, light wine, and clean beds, in spacious chambers; and dreamed of the loves of the glow-worms.

We left Moutiers in time to witness one of the loveliest sunrises I have ever seen—except at sea—and soon crossing the open valley, entered narrow winding glens, like those we had traversed in the gloom, alleys of rock clothed with black firs, and reconciled to beauty by the ever-lucid stream and the living green which fringed its margin. These led to another open valley—the valley of Tavannes—bright with fertile meadows, and dotted with frequent cottages, in which we stopped at an hotel praised by Murray, in front of which stood several English carriages, indicating the success of the recommendation. We did not test its justice, for the master of our horses and movements indicated that he could not allow us to breakfast so early; but as he refreshed his horses with bread and water, and as a long hill slanted just before us, we walked on, observing the dwindlings of the infant Birs to its source, a bright spring not far from the path. Our way, between sloping meadows plenteously sprinkled with the pale violet crocus, led up to the rocky barrier of the vale, which is here pierced by an arch of forty feet in height—apparently natural, but widened by art—bearing the name of *Pierre Portius*—and the remains of a Roman inscription; through which, looking backward as through a framework, there is a radiant picture of the valley and the next barrier of the Jura range. The onward road continued to rise gently between pine-clad heights, and then descended among similar boundaries, but with lovelier accompaniments of detail. Here we recognised the minor beauties of Switzerland in all their affluence: the luxuriant shrubs; the patches and clumps of bright field-flowers; the joyous play of dazzling insects, butterflies of all sizes and hues, and dragonflies with loveliest wings of gauze; the remarkable combination of a sense of perfect dryness, with the green which seemed as if bathed in perpetual showers; the sweet scents perfuming without loading the air, blending in one charm the sense of luxury with that of freshness, so exqui-

sitely felt at early morning in the Swiss valleys. Still walking on, we ascended another hill, and reaching now the crest of the outermost rind of the Jura, beheld the range of the Bernese Alps, like clouds, but "O how different!" —the solid fabric of this rock-built world—substance not shadow—refined by sixty miles of air, and touched by the selectest influences of heaven! Glorious vision! And what a stately position from whence to embrace it was ours! Above us the crown of our hill rose rough with beauty; beside our curving path sunk a glen, so deep that its stream was scarcely audible; below us stretched the sunniest plains; beyond all the glistening snow-tops, with an icy precipice here and there slanting down amidst its own peculiar gleams. Here the carriage overtook us; we resumed our seats, and descended amidst vineyard-clad rocks—like altars to Bacchus, bearing their own offerings—to Bienne, where our coachman consummated all our happiness by telling us that he should rest for two hours, and that we might breakfast.

In a shady upper chamber of the "Hôtel of the Jura," a good inn just outside the town-walls, we took our longed-for and leisurely repast, of tea, chicken, cutlets, ham, and wine; not indisposed to beguile the time which remained, after the rage of hunger and thirst was appeased, by trying to decipher the historical pictures which the paper-hangings of the room exhibited—a series of sieges, battles, escapes, executions, pardonings, in all of which Napoleon appeared—the hero of a hundred cocked hats—but we could make out nothing distinctly except the Farewell after the Abdication at Fontainebleau, and the Flight from Waterloo—for French taste had twisted everything into such scenic formalities, that heroism scarcely knew itself—and yet these two disastrous points in the Emperor's story, by suggesting the romantic interval, imply more greatness than all his victories.

The twenty miles journey between Bienne and Berne

had nothing of interest beyond meadows and orchards, with glimpses of the distant Alps, until, towards its close, the road suddenly descended to the Aar; here a broad, blue, rushing stream, bent in a crescent, hemmed in by masses of wood, within which it might wind a hidden power and beauty, but for the opening made by the bridge, which we crossed. From its opposite edge we ascended a long hill, darkened by a thick wood of pine, which rendered the sight of Berne, lying directly below the summit, within an isthmus formed by the Aar, of which we had just seemed to take leave, and now saw again beneath our feet, almost startling. A heap of buildings, massed, piled up, turretted and pinnacled, from the embrace of this blue loop of rapid water, around which lovely pastures were tossed in bold undulations, stood before us in full view; and considering that its aspect was that of a closely built town, without any grand buildings, it presented a scene of extraordinary beauty. We reached the Falcon in time for the latest *table d'hôte*, and caught a glimpse of the Alpine panorama afterwards, from an open space in the town and the walks on the ramparts—a happy glimpse—for though the greater part of the Alpine horizon was veiled in clouds, the Jungfrau and two great cones stood greyly out as defying them; and the foreground — the steep descent below—the azure Aar—and its richly expanding banks looked so lovely, that it seemed more like duty than pleasure to look beyond it, and search for Alps in the distance; and the eye, after its busy toil, craved its reward in resting on the nearest scenery, which courted its untiring gaze. By the advice of the master of our hotel, we engaged our *voiturier* to take us to Vevay, being assured that he would convey us to Bulle on the following day; whence, by starting early, he would place us on the shore of Lake Leman, in time to catch the first steamer on its returning voyage, and thus enable us to reach Geneva by mid-day, in good time to pay our dues to the Sardinian consul and obtain his permission to gaze on Chamouni.

CHAPTER II.

JOURNEY FROM BERNE TO CHAMOUNI.

Perplexed Starting from Berne—Neueneck—A Lady imposed on us—The Value of a Protest—Freyburg—Its Church and Organ—Bulle—The Steamer unreached—Vevay—Byron and Rousseau—Chillon—Lake of Geneva—Lausanne at distance—Gibbon and Kemble—Passport Adventure at Geneva—Bonneville revisited—The Pass of Cluses—A Priest imposed on us—Walk to Chamouni.

ALTHOUGH we were to start at six, we rose in time to pay a visit to the ramparts, and to see some edges of the Alpine range breaking through the mist of morning; and were ready to start at the appointed hour. We were surprised to find a different carriage and horses provided for us than those which had brought us from Basle; but were satisfied on the *maître d'hôtel* stating, that he feared our old driver did not accurately know the way, and, therefore, he had engaged another *voiturier* for us on the same terms. To this transfer, as the horses looked stronger than our last, we did not object; but were "perplexed in the extreme" when we saw our former coachman harness his horses, and remove our luggage to his carriage. A controversy between the two parties ensued; we sought our host in vain; no one else could or would enlighten us; and we stood in the street at Berne for half an hour, while the two heroes of the whip were contending about us, with as little voice in the matter as poor Briseis was allowed in the old quarrel of Agamemnon and Achilles. The host at last appeared, and on our entreating him to decide the fray, he determined in favour of the new *régime*, and we were placed under the government of the usurping coachman.

As we quitted Berne, passing the palace of its Bears, we lost sight of the snowy Alps; but a ridge of rocky moun-

tains, singularly grotesque in form, rose before us from a basin of rich verdure. Descending into this hollow, we reached at its bottom the village of Neueneck, where a stream separates the canton of Berne from that of Freyburg. Our driver recommended our breakfasting here, in a tone of authority which we did not feel strong enough to resist; though having only travelled a few miles, and not admiring the aspect of the inn, we wished to proceed further. He spoke a little of a strange sort of French; and, therefore, the avenues of communication were not so hermetically sealed as in the case of my German governor of last year; but the difference was not much in our favour: for whereas my old plague understood nothing that I said, this new one understood nothing but what he chose to answer. Obedience now seemed best; we partook of a homely breakfast under the auspices of a short, round, smirking landlord, who was proud of a smattering of English, and recommended his eggs as "fresh from the cock." When we paid his bill, he communicated to us in French almost as bad as his English, that a lady, for whom our driver said he ought to have waited, had arrived from Berne, and was to be our travelling companion. As we had bargained with our real original coachman for the whole carriage, which, with the exception of a share of the driver's seat, our party filled, and understood that the contract was transferred *in omnibus* to his successor, we were as much surprised as vexed at this attempt to impose an unknown female upon us and the horses. From the first, we suspected that we had been made the subjects of a job; but conjectured that it consisted merely in a transfer of the bargain to the driver of some vehicle which was returning to Vevay; and that, after agreeing to the change, our proper driver had quarrelled with his substitute respecting the shares in the spoils, by which we had lost a precious hour at Berne; but that we were subject to such enforced companionship as this was beyond all our fears. When, however, the carriage appeared,

no lady was visible in the offing; so we trusted that it was a mere phantom of a lady which had haunted our host like the White Lady of Avenel; and began to ascend the long stony steep which leads from the village, keeping our seats, however, instead of walking as we should otherwise have done, in ease of the horses, considering a possessory title the best to stand or sit upon. Too soon we observed the evil in advance—a tall scraggy female, of an uncertain age, but somewhat between fifty and sixty, clothed in rusty black, with a parcel in one hand wrapped in a pocket-handkerchief of the same colour, only relieved by spots, and in the other an umbrella, which had once been green, with which she protected all that she had of complexion from the scorching sun; we passed her, however, and she made no sign; we began to hope she was not to prove a black speck upon our happiness; but when we reached the top of the hill, the carriage stopped, and she prepared, without ceremony, to take her seat on the box. I remonstrated with the driver; —our ladies, always energetic in the cause of the *mute* creation (as Lord Erskine happily designated those whom men call *brutes*), were eloquent in the cause of the horses; I was indignant at the substitution of a black gown for the prospect of the country, which it would exclude; but the lady did not seem to hear us, or the driver to mind us; he was dogged in his resolution, and she was soon firm in her seat. We then spoke with him apart; but he understood, of course, as little as he pleased; at first he seemed inclined to insist that he had a right to take any partner of his own seat, but he abandoned this ground and pleaded "that she was only going as far as Freyburg." What could we do? Three courses were open to us—to submit in silence—to leave the carriage and take our luggage back to the village, which we threatened—and to protest; and we chose the last; we protested with as much good effect as a peer in hopeless opposition, or the Player-Queen in Hamlet. I consoled myself, as we went on, conquered and burthened

and darkened and protesting, with calling to mind a Protest received, if not recorded, many years ago in the Court of King's Bench, and thinking that after all a Protest is a better peace-maker than an *If*. It was in those true Tory times, now for ever fled; after the period "when spies and special juries were unknown," and before these days when spies have grown historical, and special juries, even in the Exchequer, give verdicts against the Crown; that the celebrated Mr. Henry Hunt, in his character of redresser of wrongs, became the champion of an idle lad named Dogood, who had been imprisoned on some pretence as idle as himself, and assuming that the Lord Chief Justice sat for the redress of all grievances, attended during one long day's sharp sitting at Nisi Prius to address Lord Ellenborough on the subject's wrongs. He found no opportunity, however, on which even his consummate impudence could seize, till the business closed; for Lord Ellenborough, who had come down after an interval, during which his substitutes had made slow progress, was rushing through the list like a rhinoceros through a sugar plantation, or a Common Serjeant in the evening through a paper of small larcenies; but just as he had nonsuited the plaintiff in the twenty-second cause, which the plaintiff's attorney had thought safe till the end of a week, and was about to retire to his turtle with the conviction of having done a very good morning's work, an undeniable voice exclaimed, "My lord!" and Mr. Hunt was seen on the floor, with his peculiar air—perplexed between that of a bully and a martyr. The Bar stood aghast at his presumption; the ushers' wands trembled in their hands; and the reporters, who were retiring after a very long day, during which, though some few city firms had been crushed into bankruptcy and some few hearts broken, by the results of the causes, they could honestly describe as "affording nothing of the slightest interest except to the parties,"

rushed back and seized their note books to catch any word of that variety of rubbish which is of "public interest." My lord paused, and looked thunders, but spoke none. "I am here, my lord, on the part of the boy Dogood," proceeded the undaunted Quixote. His lordship cast a moment's glance on the printed list, and quietly said, "Mr. Hunt, I see no name of any boy Dogood in the paper of causes," and turned towards the door of his room. "My lord!" vociferated the orator, "am I to have no redress for an unfortunate youth? I thought your lordship was sitting for the redress of injuries in a court of justice." "O no, Mr. Hunt!" still calmly responded the judge, "I am sitting at Nisi Prius; and I have no right to redress any injuries except those which may be brought before the jury and me in the causes appointed for trial." "My lord," then said Mr. Hunt, somewhat subdued by the unexpected amenity of the judge, "I only desire to protest." "O, is that all?" said Lord Ellenborough; "by all means protest, and go about your business!" So Mr. Hunt protested, and went about his business; and my lord went unruffled to his dinner; and both parties were content. In like manner, we satisfied ourselves with protesting; the lady retained her seat; and the carriage proceeded to Freyburg. To finish the episode of the lady, I may as well anticipate our course a little, and go back when we have dropped her. Notwithstanding the assurance of our coachman that she was only bound to Freyburg, and the confirmation it seemed to receive from her disappearance there, we had no sooner begun to ascend the hill beyond the city gate, than we saw again the same black gown wave, and the identical umbrella lower before us; and though we detached the youngest of our party to take the place on the box, our coachman insisted on his quitting it. This produced an explanation with the fair one beneath, who astonished us by asserting that the carriage was more hers than ours; that she had a

right to any or every seat in it; that she was the servant of a lady who had engaged the carriage from Vevay to Berne, and had directed her to return in it to Vevay; and that the coachman, finding more profitable passengers, had gone off without her, and she had followed him to reclaim her rights. We could not refute this statement, which was probably in part true, though she must have been in collusion with the driver at Freyburg; as, had she told this story there, we should have sifted it, and either have disproved it or taken another carriage. We were now, however, fixed with the fair one, without even the relief of grumbling at her presence; on the contrary, we felt bound to make her amends by extra civility, especially as she refused to exercise any control over the carriage except sitting on its box. She said she was only annoyed because she feared "Madame regarded her as a *mauvaise femme;*" a notion which never entered Madame's mind; indeed if our companion had not been strictly entitled, by virtue of Milton's authority, to call on a thousand liveried angels to lackey her, she might safely traverse "savage wilds," without the fear of affront from the rudest followers of Comus. So we may drop her now; though we did not do so in verity till we reached the Lake of Geneva.

Freyburg, which we saw before noon, comprises the vestiges of dim antiquity; a romantic strength of situation; and the wonders of the modern engineering art, each in a high degree, and all combining to form a picture of extraordinary brilliancy and loveliness. Travelling through a tame, fertile country, you suddenly find yourself beside a ravine of a thousand feet in depth, the bed of a river (the Saarine); on the opposite precipice of which an *old-world* town huddles and crouches; its churches alone seem bold to raise themselves towards heaven; its grey angular walls, low square watch-towers, creeping Jesuits' colleges, look as if they were painfully exposed on the steep bank they surmount, and actually craved the shade of woods long cut down, which had

left them naked to the staring eyes of modern generations. Your first practical query is, how you are to reach the town, —so modest in grey antiquity—on the opposite side of the gulf; but almost as soon as the difficulty is presented, it is solved; for lo! a net-work, light, as if spider-spun, seems floating in the air, and on your approach you find it denotes a bridge suspended over the chasm, substantial as the rocks that hold it, and airy as a fantastic German poet's lightest fancy. Our suspension bridges—even that of the Menaï—are vulgar and ponderous things compared with it; not only is the span of its suspension larger, and the height from the stream a third greater, but the absence of all visible buttress, and of all assistant arches, leaves the magical effect more perfect. You enter on it, and another kindred wonder of art appears, not so vast, but still more beautiful; for a ravine, opening to the left, yawns, walled by yet loftier banks,—and across it, and above you, high in air, floats another bridge, of even lighter construction, which, diminished in the distance, might be thought the pathway of fairies. Art seems to have caught the beauty of the scenes it was privileged to sport in, and to cast its own rainbows over the deep valleys.

Having passed the first bridge, and entered the town, we found it a quaint old place, the topmost heights occupied by low collegiate buildings, which are connected with the streets below by narrow flights of steps, which the figure of a portly priest often fills and darkens; with rows of shops, reminding us of Chester, and trees looking brown in the market-place. The church of St. Nicholas is the principal structure—a handsome Gothic pile, swelling with the organ of European repute; with a portal illustrated by such strange figures, as I can scarcely believe were ever assembled even in a dream. They represent the Day of Judgment; adorable attributes are caricatured in a manner one dares scarce think of: the opening of hell is signified by a pig's mouth, vomiting flame; angels flutter all wings; devils are clothed with pigs' heads;

and a process of weighing souls is represented, not individually, but in masses, a number being placed at once in the scale of Eternal Justice, while a devil hangs on slily, to weigh them down; how assorted, Sir Thomas Browne himself could scarcely guess. Such a representation—not the conception of some gloomy fanatic, whose Night Thoughts, being more like hideous phantasms even than Dr. Young's, are expressed in a terrible old print—a work elaborately and vividly carved in marble, in the vestibule of a noble church, under the control of a learned body—bespeaks a debasement of the clerical mind, I can scarcely understand under any form of the Christian Faith. An attempt to render the spiritual grossly palpable; fearful to the lowest cowardice of the dullest sinner, I can understand; but to blend it with absurdity so debasing as this, and to embody it in sculpture, with the assent of a learned clergy, is to me a moral wonder. I can conceive some half-crazed enthusiast, so haunted by terrors of "Judgment to come" as to find relief in expressing them in grotesque and fanciful extravagance; but the deliberate sanction of such a work is scarcely to be explained, except by that which one would not impute even to the Jesuits—a disbelief in the awful realities it debases.

Having partaken, at the *table d'hôte* of the hotel, of the dinner, which concluded at two o'clock, we were invited by our host to join a party which he was making up to hear the great organ; a gratification which may be enjoyed, when eleven or twelve can be collected to pay a franc a piece for the benefit of the organist. We thought it was not quite reverential to open the church for such a purpose; but recollecting that we do the same thing in England on a greater scale, assented, and took our seats with a congregation of a dozen persons, whose admission fee, with ours, had been "added to the dinner bill, by way of rider." The organ is a huge edifice of bright pipes, filling the back of a gallery which occupies the entire breadth of the church, and

at first threatened to rend its roof with a tempest of sound, which, however, softened occasionally into thrilling sweetness. The performance, which lasted about three quarters of an hour, comprised three or four pieces of sacred music, but closed (how consistently with the sacredness of the building I will leave our own Deans and Chapters to judge) with a portion of the incantation scene of Der Freischütz, which only wanted my old friends, the owl with fiery eyes, the lizards, toads, serpents, and spectral pack of hounds, to attend on an authentic casting of the seventh bullet. Some of the gentler passages—expressive of pleading, wailing, throbbing, pitying, exulting,—seemed so instinct with human feeling, that I could not believe, until assured to the contrary, that the sounds were entirely those of an instrument, but thought that the voices of women or children had been employed to aid the effect; but the more boisterous passages were much too powerful for the area of the church. I never before so fully understood the force of Pope's thankfulness for Man, that Nature did not

> ——— "thunder in his opening ears,
> And stun him with the music of the spheres:"

for surely the spheres could not make more noise than that which yet rings in those ears which were almost split by the famous organ of Freyburg.

We reached Bulle at the delicious hour of sunset; and a fine sunset can scarcely be enjoyed in a more delightful spot—the opening of a semicircular valley, bounded by green undulating hills, rising into grey rocky summits. We had been informed by our host at Berne, that by quitting this place very early in the morning we might reach Vevay in time for the first steam-boat returning to Geneva; but we were induced to relax in our morning diligence by the counter-statement of the *garçon* at Bulle, that no steam-boat now called at Vevay till the afternoon; and, relying on the last information as the most authentic, started at six instead of five o'clock, and "just arrived in time to be too late."

When we reached the top of the hill where, far below, the town of Vevay, the lake, and mountains beyond it, burst on the view, we saw—justifying our Bernese intelligence—a little black speck, just emerging from the extreme head of the lake, soon growing to the size of a spider, and making the still blue water quiver, as with an insect's wing, which we first guessed, and then ascertained, to be that steamer, the existence of which had been denied, and which now was approaching the town. Should we be in time to meet it? At first, measuring the water and land with the eye, we thought it possible; we were already on the descent to Vevay; but to quicken the pace of the *voiturier* was as impossible as to retard that of the steamer; and we soon gave up the hope as lost. The descent to Vevay is now, indeed, like "reading" in the Spelling-Book, and everything else, "made easy;" but it is also made all but endless; for the road twists so tortuously, and *angles* so sharply, that it extends the space actually traversed from one mile to four, consoling the traveller, however, by magnificent views of the finest part—indeed the only very fine part—of Lake Leman, as its breadth is developed, and its shores expand before him. I am afraid the little innocent steamer was a spot in our prospect: we saw it approach the shore; we lost it for a few minutes beneath the town while it took in some wiser tourists; we followed it with longing eyes, when it emerged; and, before we lost sight of it at our last turn, it was some miles beyond us on its homeward way. We made the best of matters, which were not very bad after all; drove to the Hotel of the Three Crowns, which is more like a palace than an inn; and consoled ourselves by taking a *déjeûner à la fourchette* in a splendid saloon, looking directly on a terrace of grass and flowers, and beyond it, upon the lake; a position not the most unhappy in this world. We learned from the master of the hotel that the next steamer would call, on its way to Geneva, at two o'clock; but that it would soon pass on its course to the

head of the lake: so we embraced the opportunity of going thither, and of seeing the celebrated Castle of Chillon, and the scenes which had place in Rousseau's heart, and are celebrated in Lord Byron's stanzas. Our host was said to be an Englishman; if not, he deserved to be one; for he facilitated our wish to depart as readily as he welcomed us; and not only sent us from his own garden-stairs, in his own boat, to the steamer, but told us, in the hearing of the boatmen, not to pay them anything, for which they muttered some wishes, unlike blessings, on his devoted head, and for which we were proportionally grateful, as there are few things in travelling more tiresome than the obligation of pondering on the *honorarium* which may satisfy the unliquidated claims of the subordinate contributors to our pleasure. The surly boatmen did not venture even to look a demand, as we stepped up the side of the steamer, any more than if they had been servants of a railway, in the face of those agreeable commands, "to give no money, on any pretence, to anybody" but the Company, which I hope will soon become parcel of the law of nations, "all the world over!"

Received on board the steamer, we rapidly approached the head of the lake—towards the great gorge of the Rhône crowned with snowy Alps—the chief of which, the Dent du Midi, sent up its enormous ivory tusks, unclouded, into the skies. When we stopped at Villeneuve, the queer little town at the extremity of the water, we were informed that we might have a boat to visit Chillon, and rejoin the vessel on her return; so, committing ourselves to four stout rowers, we passed the Hotel Byron—a very showy hotel, which overlooks the subjugated prison, and exults in a name which, however splendid, has little association with sweet or happy thoughts—and were safely landed close to this illustrated cage of ancient tyranny. Our visit was brief—limited by the stay of the steamer at Villeneuve—but long enough to impress me with a belief that the scene is almost

as despicable as dismal. It is not a place to fear, or admire, or love, or even hate—but simply to *dislike*. Instead of dark ponderous towers, indicating the ancient predominance of might over virtuous constancy, suggestive of power and heroic suffering, I saw a squalid building of white-washed brickwork, prodigal in unpicturesque angles, and surmounted by low pepper-box turrets, having the air of a provincial house of correction or a union workhouse; and had I descried it rising from a tract of poor, cold, level land in England, I should have assumed it to be one of the products of the philosophy of Somerset House. As we approached it, I observed in a large mouldy division of the wall, an inscription which would scarcely have been found on one of those abodes of poverty—the words "Liberté et Patrie," encircled by a flaring green wreath—like an outline painted for the reception of coloured lamps on the night of a royal birthday. If anything could have added to the sense of discomfort with which I surveyed the "dreary pile," it would have been this tawdry inscription—which, if the walls enshrined the scene of some great self-sacrifice, the execution or long captivity of some hero, whose example had animated the heart of a country with resolution to resist oppression to the last—would not be needed to tell the sight-seeing world to admire! Such an invitation seems like making the most of national materials—prison and patriotism—ticketing and labelling them for show; and would not be adopted by a "nation of shopkeepers," who, if they know the worth of money, know also what is above it, and who would not thus coin their history into half-crowns by tricking out the miseries of old times in the affectations of the new. The interior did not belie the threat of the outside; its upper chambers, some of which are used as depositories for arms, being low white-washed rooms, looking like the rooms of an unaired barrack, more fit for teasing than torturing; and the dungeon, which is the chief attraction, scarcely sinking to the dismal. It is merely a long, damp, arched room—

not below the lake but just at the level of its waters—lighted, as well as many a knight's chamber in the turret of a Border castle, by low narrow slits in the walls, and looking over the lake; comfortless enough no doubt; but still, not suggesting the notion of a tyranny which made imprisonment torture. Through one of these openings, we saw the lovely little island to which Lord Byron alludes, with its three trees set in blue water like a flower-bed—a fairy nest—which might soothe a captive's tedious hours, if he could see it; but he has cruelly diminished the amount of sunbeams which find their way through this opening, and has heightened his effect by shutting up the others. I must, however, vindicate the poet's accuracy as to the number of pillars—"Seven columns murky and grey"—to which Mr. Murray appends a note, asserting "there are only five;" a curious instance of an erroneous attempt by a very accurate narrator of facts to correct a very unscrupulous weaver of fancies:—for, unless my eyes have deceived me, the poet is right; the columns asserting "We are seven," as pertinaciously as the immortal child in Wordsworth.

After we had been duly shown through all the visible rooms, edified by the sight of a beam which once assisted at executions, and, perhaps, some other toys of tyranny, we were "discharged, paying our fees;" regained our boat, and rejoined the vessel now in full steam for Geneva. I gazed on the scenes among which Rousseau has placed the few incidents of his eloquent but sickly romance, among which the "Hotel Byron" now towers, and the interest of which is weakened, if not distorted, when they are contemplated through the medium of Lord Byron's praise. The fictions of Rousseau's brain, discoloured as they are by sophistry, vindicate a truth in our experience from the intense feeling with which the author himself regards them; while even the physical realities of this scenery lose their individuality, while the poetical commentator forgets them in himself, and, professing to interpret their spirit, only

develops his own. Lord Byron, amid the many-coloured mockeries of his life, wished to be thought the mournful enthusiast which Rousseau was; but the difference remains between a flaming reality and a phosphoric illusion. It was natural for Rousseau, familiar with the village of Clarens and the Rocks of Meillerie, to take them for the scenes of his story; but there is no truth in the elaborate stanzas of Lord Byron, which, passing by the influences which genius can shed abroad on external nature, "peopling it with affections," represent these spots as peculiarly the home of love, having "a sound, and sense, and sight of sweetness." True, here, "the Rhône has spread itself a couch, the Alps have reared a throne;" but surely the opening of the wide gorge of a large turbid river, too marshy to allow an approach even within the sound of its ripple, and the white irregular pinnacles of the Dent du Midi, rising above dark bare mountains, noble as those features are, do not suggest the luxurious bower in which "early Love his Psyche zone unbound, and hallowed it with loneliness." Clarens has *no* aspect of the "birth-place of love;" it is a long, dull, bricky village, stretching along the breast of a scantily-wooded hill—steep enough for weariness but not for romance. Its trees do *not* "take root in love," at least they do not display any fruits of such sweet nurture—"all things are not here of lôve;" they are open, arid, uninviting—suspended between ugliness and grandeur—but having no touch of loveliness except that with which Rousseau's sentiment has tinted them. The whole scene—lake, rocks, and mountains, is one which may inspire great thoughts—thoughts tending to brace and strengthen the sinews of the mind, not to relax them in voluptuous weakness; attractions the reverse of those with which the English poet has arrayed it.

After passing Vevay, we found the shores of the lake diminish in interest; for though the hills are sometimes lofty, they slope from the water to tame summits. Along

one of these the city of Lausanne appeared, not striking as a picture, surveyed from the lake, but nobly placed for commanding prospects. We stopped at the landing-place opposite to it for some time, to discharge and to take in passengers ; time enough to call to mind the great names associated with it, though not to ascertain the localities immediately connected with them. There is, it seems, an Hotel Gibbon here, partly standing on the site of that garden in which the Historian took his evening walk, after writing the last lines of the work to which many years had been devoted ; a walk which alone would have hallowed the spot, if, alas ! there had not been those intimations in the work itself of a purpose which, tending to desecrate the world, must deprive all associations attendant on its accomplishment of a claim to be dwelt on as holy ! How melancholy is it to feel, that intellectual congratulation which attends the serene triumph of a life of studious toil, chilled by the consciousness that the labour, the research, the Asiatic splendour of illustration, have been devoted, in part at least, to obtain a wicked end—not in the headlong wantonness of youth, or the wild sportiveness of animal spirits, but urged by the deliberate, hearted purpose of crushing the light of human hope—all that is worth living for, and all that is worth dying for — and substituting for them nothing but a rayless scepticism. That evening walk is an awful thing to meditate on ; the walk of a man of rare capacities, tending to his own physical decline, among the serenities of loveliest nature, enjoying the thought that, in the chief work of his life, just accomplished, he had embodied a hatred to the doctrines which teach men to love one another, to forgive injuries, and to hope for a diviner life beyond the grave ; and exulting in the conviction that this work would survive to teach its deadly lesson to young ingenuous students, when he should be dust. One may derive consolation from reflecting that the style is too meretricious, and the attempt too elaborate and too subtle, to

achieve the proposed evil; and in hoping that there were some passages in the secret history of the author's heart, which may extenuate its melancholy error; but our personal veneration for successful toil is destroyed in the sense of the strange malignity which blended with its impulses, and we feel no desire to linger over the spot where so painful a contradiction is presented as a charm.

With far different feelings I called to recollection that here John Philip Kemble passed the last six years of his life, realising that wish expressed with such curious felicity in Sir Walter Scott's Address, which he delivered on bidding adieu to the Edinburgh stage—in which he hoped to enjoy

> "Some space between the theatre and grave;
> That, like the Roman in the Capitol,
> I may adjust my mantle ere I fall;"—

a wish to be echoed by every one engaged in busy and anxious life—the more appropriate and affecting in the lips of a retiring actor, not because the exercise of his art is less innocent than the pursuit of the severer professions, but because being associated with the most radiant of intellectual recreations, it presents the most direct contrast to the stillness of the grave. Even at this distance of more than a quarter of a century, the majesty of form and action which "disturbed, delighted, raised, refined," my own opening manhood, lives before me so vividly, that I can scarcely realise the belief that the frame which partly was, and partly wrought those wonders, is now mouldering in a cemetery of the hill, on the slope of which I am gazing. The sound of that voice, which it was the fashion even for admirers to deplore as feeble and husky, yet trembles around my heart, as when it fluttered in its meditative gentleness among those images of pensive decay, which retain the royal murderer within the sympathies of humanity, by the common sentiment of declining years, when his "way of life has fallen in the sear—the yellow leaf." I still behold the marble effigy of the Roman philosopher, sculptured by

Addison, endowed by his genius with heroic energy, and redeemed by the touch of affection, as his Cato stepped forth from the group of his despairing friends, to receive the news of the death of his son:—the passionate eagerness of his inquiry, when his fear suggested that Marcus had fled before the sudden terrors of the revolt; the enforced composure with which he listened to the narrative of the youth's bravery and his fall; and the triumph of nature over systems and language, in the broken, heart-breaking utterance of the words, "*I 'm satisfied!*" at once realising to the young student the image of Roman majesty that had floated dimly before him, and commending it to his heart by an outbreak of fatherly love, not the less true because the historian has not recorded, nor the poet conceived it. The gracious allowance for the weary boy Lucius, fallen asleep over his instrument, yet redeems the stern Brutus from the cold pride and the low scorn which Shakspeare has attributed to him, and which his knowledge of Portia's death neither justifies nor explains. I still shrink beneath the eagle-eyed disdain with which, in him, Coriolanus received the proposition of Aufidius, that he should return to Rome in safety, imagining, as his preferable lot, himself howling to his foe in battle for mercy, while he cowered over the image which his passion had conjured up for a moment, like a bird of prey over its victim; still witness his outspread arms, and generous exultation, while he claimed for his safeguard a "bosom void of blame;" still behold his arm dashed up towards heaven, as with the old love of country rushing back on his heart, at the insulting charge that the Romans were the seed of outlaws and robbers, he exclaimed—"The seed of Gods!"—still thrill with the exquisite change from indignation flashing with the remembrance of the injustice by which he had suffered, at the old familiar thought of the very forms under which it was wrought, in the words "giddy factions" to an excusing fondness; still glow and tremble at the last majestic

action, of fluttering the Volscians in Corioli—even as on the night of 25th June, 1817, when he closed, with a decision befitting his own Roman style, his scenic life. No temptation, no entreaty, no fond lingering regrets, enticed him back for a single night to renew the dream-like splendour of theatrical existence; he laid it down once and for ever, and those memories in which it yet lives are fading fast after him. There will soon be few who will remember him or his majestic sister; the living sense of her greatness will soon be sought only amidst some recollections of remote childhood, where figures of maternal dignity and queenly sorrow may stand out amidst the glooms of years; where the "likenesses of kingly crowns" may yet hover over the agonised brow; till some may only see "an arm, and some a hand, and some the waving of a gown," as the tragic vision slowly and reluctantly vanishes! I know of no feeling so full of the consciousness of the perishable nature of all the grandeurs of this life, as that which struggles to embalm for a few years longer, those august presences in which the forms of heroic greatness, and the intensity of passions hushed only in death, lived before us, and which wrestles with the conviction that even the frames of those at the call of whose genius buried majesties "burst their cerements," are now but "the quintessence of dust," and our thoughts following the train—the waning shadows of shades! It is, however, a consoling thought, that the associations connected with the race of Kemble are not yet without a living witness—to give intimation to the younger part of this generation of the noble outline of feature, the high courtesy, the "learned spirit of human dealing," which, once exhibited by members of one family, shed life and beauty on the scene; and to quicken the recollections of its happier elders. While the younger brother yet survives, to bid those graces linger in tones of subdued sweetness, and enable us to erect an idea stage on which chivalrous shapes breathe heroic passions,

we may apply to the genius of his race those exquisite words he has so often breathed over the entranced loveliness of Juliet—

> "Thou art not conquer'd! Beauty's ensign yet
> Is crimson on thy lips, and in thy cheeks;
> And death's pale flag is not advanced there!"

We reached the quay of Geneva as the evening light was waning; and I cherished some hope that, as many of our fellow-passengers had left Geneva that morning, to make the voyage of the lake in the steamer, who were stopping unchallenged on shore, we should escape the demand of our passport, and one obstacle to our departure. But I was mistaken; neither twilight nor confusion availed us; by some intuition, which I cannot fathom, a stiff, stolid man, in buckram, stationed on the steps, recognised us for strangers, demanded our passport, and of course received it. We hurried on to our old quarters at the Crown; they were full. The great Hôtel des Bergues was a long way off, and that was probably still more crowded; so, after following a *commissionnaire* up two staircases, to be repelled by a similar answer, we found a resting-place at the Hôtel de l'Europe, which, we were told, "commanded a view of the lake;" and so it did, if you only stretched your neck far enough out of the topmost attic-window; but it was more familiar with the figures of market-carts and butchers'-stalls, which occupied an else vacant piece of dirty ground before it. The landlord, however, was really disposed to oblige us; and speaking good English, was soon made acquainted with our eagerness to proceed to Chamouni, and heartily aided our wish. Under his auspices, while supper was preparing, we engaged a convenient gentleman, who undertook to provide us with a carriage and horses, which should start at five for St. Martin; and to remove all impediments, by procuring our passport from the Genevese police, and obtaining the signature of the Sardinian Consul. Thus far we seemed to prosper beyond our hopes. I slept

lightly, in readiness to start up in a moment for Chamouni, and welcomed at four the knock of the brawny porter, who thrust into my room a huge flaring yellow dip, and a passport. While I was dressing in a joyful hurry, which rather impeded my purpose, it occurred to me that it would be as well just to examine the document, and see that the Sardinian receipt for the four francs had been duly inscribed; when, confusion to my hopes! I found the flimsy and fatal paper was the Prussian passport of some other gentleman, whose name I could not decipher, substituted for mine, which was a Foreign-office passport, embracing my family! Huddling on my clothes, in a vexation which I felt to be comical, I flared and fumed about the staircases and passages of the house, to find some one to whom I might impart my perplexity; at last I found the drowsy porter, and after stammering out wild English and an impotent attempt at French, at last by pantomimic action made him understand it. The poor fellow seemed very sorry, though not at all to blame; and awakened his master, who was very sorry too; got up directly, and did the best that could be done for us. He perceived at once that the clerk at the police-office had delivered out the wrong document, which had been taken, without examination, to the Consul. Two things, therefore, were to be done before our release could be achieved—the procurement of the true passport from one office, and its signature at another; and, as the police-office did not open till nine, and the Consul would not be astir till ten, our departing, so as to reach Chamouni before night, seemed hopeless. To increase our annoyance, the carriage appeared duly, as the clock struck five. The morning was lovely; but our consolation was to gaze at the vision of Mont Blanc, which we had never before seen from Geneva, and which now appeared in the clear morning sky, with a pale saffron rim round its snowy tops—a beautiful, but puzzling phenomenon—at once seeming far off, and yet almost over us. While we stood

admiring, and growing reconciled to this passport-vexed world, we were apprised by our worthy host that he had succeeded in the first step, having awakened the careless clerk, and opened the Genevan Office, and that he had sent up to the Consul's house, in hope that he, too, would condescend to awake and sign. He even suggested that we should set out, in the hope that we might meet the messenger, as his road from the Consul's would join ours at the Porte de Rive; and as by doing so we *seemed* to be doing something, we complied, and proceeded in or with the carriage to the Porte de Rive, where we had an agreeable side-view of the narrow dirty street leading to the Consul's abode. Here we waited an hour—a very long hour, although it was diversified by seeing the lads in blouses, and the lasses in neat boddices, flocking in from the country to market, with heaps of vegetables on their heads; and by running up the street to see if the messenger was coming, and back again; until, just as the neighbouring clock struck seven, the passport appeared, all right; and proceeding onwards towards Bonneville, we soon forgot all our annoyances, in the enjoyment of the soft air of a delicious day; of the scenery, which to me was even better than new; and the assurance that we should sleep at Chamouni.

We breakfasted, of course, at Bonneville: and the coincidence vividly recalled to recollection the delightful hours we spent, illustrated by the same refreshment, just two years ago. The days were as like each other as two summer days could be—equally bright, and hot, and clear—or, this, if possible, was the clearer; our appetites were keener by the two hours' delay at Geneva in the now almost forgotten matter of the passport: but there was not the same enjoyment of the time, nor anything like it. It seems as if the pleasures of this world, even when the intellectual and the sensuous are blended, would never bear attempted repetition; to enjoy one series of sensations once, is all that is usually permitted to Man. Almost all *encores* are failures,

whether of song or situation; the wish to hear, or experience again, ungratified, is better than its fulfilment, with the exception, however, of scenery, in which "Nature never did betray the heart that loved her." Perhaps the inferiority of any recurrence of a pleasant incident to its original arises in part from our expecting a similarity of minute circumstances, which never recurs, and feeling disappointed that "another" is not "the same." On the present occasion, we arrived just before the *diligence*, which breakfasts here *à la fourchette*—no doubt the great event in the landlady's day—and we were obliged, not only to wait till towards its close, but to witness it, which was by no means an agreeable preparative for our own. The coach passengers consisted of one party of five, all equally disposed to eat and to talk; and they did both so marvellously, that the performance would have been remarkable, if confined to either. There was a stout, thick-set, middle-aged man, with black hair and beard, who seemed to be the director of the journey, two ladies, and two wild-looking youths; all the males very shabbily dressed, and having the appearance of a low order of shopkeepers, whom, at first, it was pleasant to regard as enjoying so glorious a holiday as a trip to Chamouni, whither they were bound; but when the serious eating commenced, it took away all our sympathy and our own appetite with it. We fell in again with the same party at St. Martin, and they were then actually eating another hearty meal—raw pig's feet, and other atrocities—by way of refreshment from the labour of admiring some of the loveliest scenery of the world. I trembled lest we should encounter them, in their eating hour, at Chamouni; but that misfortune was spared us.

If, however, our breakfast at Bonneville fell short in enjoyment of its precursor, our ride thence to St. Martin more than equalled the first. The freshness of novelty—the shock of surprised delight—were wanting; but we were better prepared to understand and appreciate the infinite

beauties of detail, which are here sufficient to expand, and expanding to heighten the general impression of greatness, even after many visits. The road from Bonneville to Cluses presents a singular and beautiful contrast of dark rocky mountains on its right, and the Môle on its left, which rises out of a narrow fringe of shrubs, or trees diminished to shrubs by the magnitude of the associated objects, to the height of nearly six thousand feet—a regular pyramid—clothed to the top with short grass, as bare of trees and as smooth of turf as an English down, except that here and there a single tree makes a dark dot, which might be a furze-bush or clump of wild flowers. It is a pastoral giant—a throne on which an enormous Pan might find a fitting seat—an earthborn prodigy. It is a variety very rare in Switzerland; for though "riches fineless" are often cast into the lap of the sternest grandeur in her valleys, this contrast of a dull, sober, mountain, excelling in height the rocky precipices which confront it, and holding divided empire in the mind with their dark sublimity, is rare and strange, and produces an impression of its own, as a Cobbett might do among a throng of romantic poets. Turning sharply from it at Cluses, and passing through the deep alleys of that old place, wedged in between its impending hills, you enter the pass which opens on St. Martin, and which, on mature deliberation, I prefer to any of the other glorious mountain defiles I have had the happiness to traverse; at least when I regard it with reference to its position as the vestibule to the Alpine Temple of Savoy. The *Via Mala* is more astounding as a mere slit in one mass of mountain, changed, by human power, from a gulf to gaze down upon, into a road, and then endowed in its recesses with the freight of human delight and wonder. The ascending valley from Bellinzona to Airolo is timbered with nobler trees, and made alive by a lovelier stream. The corresponding descent of the Reuss has more majesty in the sculptured bed of the river, and its waters are possessed

with a nobler fury than those of the Arve. The Munster Thal has a more dazzling alternation of narrow pine-clad alleys with lovely circles of bright verdure. The Höllenthal has more delicate air of fairy seclusion, and its slender pinnacles of rock, its sparkling water, and radiant trees break into daintier extravagances of beauty; but for the interweaving of the elements of the majestic with those of the lovely—the fusion of beauty in greatness—where the most exquisite details not merely fill up the vacancies of grandeur, but are themselves of grandeur's essence—not confused and contrasted with each other, but all aiding by infinite gradations to produce one glorious whole—no pass which I have seen approaches it. Unlike most mountain passes, its course is almost on a level; like a stately corridor, it widens regularly as its mountain buttresses increase in elevation; until, when it has attained a considerable expanse, the walls of rock on the right are wreathed up into the mighty Aiguille Varens, a grotesque figure crowning its ridge, in shape as if an elephant "did his proboscis wreathe to make men sport," over the entrance to the region of Mont Blanc; just exhibiting, by way of flag or signal, one huge patch of snow at its side. Below this giant fantasy of nature, and the turreted rocky wall which stretches beside it, the earth seems almost to bound from the rock, with the life and passion of water, springing downwards in large rounded masses of verdant and flowery pasture, and then rushing by steep slants, covered with woods, to the level meadows through which the Arve foams —a broad milk-white stream, with ice-born power, which would almost mar the loveliness it feeds, but that it is bosomed in the coppices that run sportively along its margin. To make amends for the turbid character of the Arve, from the hills on the left gush unnumbered fountains of the purest water, sometimes darting from on high among the brushwood and gemming it with a mimic shower; sometimes falling buried in the wood beneath which they gurgle,

till they rush into a clear basin by the pathway side; sometimes starting first into life at your very feet, and glistening along the road-side, till they find some channel across it to the river. Hence, no doubt, the exquisite verdure which luxuriates through the floor of the valley, along which the road stretches like a garden-path, beneath a succession of orchard bowers. Traverse it, as we did, in hottest mid-day, when the mountain walls scarcely cast a shadow on the road, and its unparched greenness will be a perpetual wonder; it nestles in golden fruitfulness; and almost every opening between its trees laden with apples or plums, shows a glimpse of a five or six acre farm and its dove-coloured homestead—space enough to live and die in! The beautiful cascade d'Arpenaz, which springs into its life and death from the left-hand heights, is not singular here in its fantastic grace; it is only the fairest representative of the water-genius of the hills; it has many unseen or half-seen fainter copies; indeed, before we reached it, one rivulet sprang so like it into air, to be dashed so soon into similar diamond dust, that I doubted whether I did not then see, though with diminished power, the Queen of the Valley. When we reached the true cascade, however, it vindicated its supremacy; it looked to me loftier, and its radiant dust more copious, than before, probably because the hill-stream came down in a greater volume; and, as if to prove how poor all our fancies are compared with Nature's facts; as if to mock me for representing the watery dust shed on the air as the frailest of her wonders; behold now on the steep rock-pillar that juts just beyond the fall, an emptier, fainter, less substantial appearance—the shadow of that very dust—gone—for the rock is in shade and reflects it no more, and Fancy is foiled even in her own region of middle air by Reality! We soon reached our old resting place of St. Martin, and the full view of the snowy wonder of Europe—now more impressive because far better understood than at first—but as we hoped and believed to be soon even better

known, and to rise hereafter on the mind with some nearer semblance of its true majesty.

As the day was far spent, we determined to take decisive means for pressing onwards; and, instead of ordering one *char-à-banc*, which carries three, and trying to secure one place in another, we ordered at once two *chars-à-banc* for Chamouni. The liberality of this order, instead of causing delay, ensured its immediate performance. We heard the landlady's voice, shrill, yet surely, with something of the angel in its tone, repeat to the ostler the purport of those delightful words, not spoiled by being rendered into French, and the ostler caught hers up and sent them back again with a hoarser sweetness. "*Two chars-à-banc for Chamouni!*" What an echo do these words raise in the heart while I write them! One required would not have been at hand—must be waited for; but two were just ready; and, before we had quite finished one bottle of the same red wine which had refreshed us here before, and which bore repetition better than the Bonneville breakfast, they were announced; and a minute did not elapse before the *chars-à-banc* were bearing us on the crowning stage of our journey.

We despatched our two young people in the lightest carriage, with the least luggage, that they might secure rooms for us, as our prompt departure had quickened other tourists, who were resting at St. Martin; or gave an *impetus* to the stable establishment; for we observed other *chars-à-banc* in active preparation when we mounted ours; but my wife and I followed close behind, for a quarter of an hour, the happiest of human creatures. How could we be otherwise? The hot, cloudless day, was declining into golden evening—each minute sweeter than the last; the valley one undulating grass-plot, studded with fruit-trees, whence exuberant apples and plums dropped lay plenteously about the road; and the snowy tops, whose feet we were approaching, shot up at every turn from the wooded

banks we were about to ascend, as if already close to us. Yet there came a speck on the evening's felicity—a speck?—a huge blot—in the shape of a thickset, black-browed, bullet-headed, black-eyed priest—like him of Thomson, a "round, fat, and oily" priest, "all bright and glistening with unholy dew." He ran up to the driver of our slender vehicle, and intimated his pleasure to take a seat in it; the driver referred him to us; and we, thinking there would be more room for his Reverence in our first carriage, suggested that he might ask for a seat there, by our authority. He apparently did not understand us; for he fell back, instead of running forward; when I felt that, however unpleasant the addition to our party would be, it was our duty to submit to it, rather than offer a slight to a minister of religion, although his mode of faith was not ours. We, therefore, stopped the carriage, and called to him that we would make room—an invitation which he immediately accepted, and was presently squeezed into our *char-à-banc*, to the woeful crumpling of our carelessly-disposed wardrobe, and the discomfort of all that was squeezable in our composition. But this was not the worst: he began very glibly to talk French, which the lady understood, but I did not; and to which she felt bound, in courtesy, to reply; and as he spoke with the rapidity which seems natural to the language, I was afflicted with a discordant *jabber* close to my ears, of which I did not understand a word. Only think! —to have such a silence—so solemn and sweet, that we scarcely breathed, lest we should disturb it—in such a scene —displaced by the pattering of French—it was hard to bear! We soon began to ascend the narrow, stony, winding, embowered road, which leads over the first range of hills, by the side of a basin, whence a lake has been stricken by a fall of stones, towards Servoz; and here I hoped that our priest would show mercy to the mules, if not to us, by descending, of which piece of very common humanity I gladly set him the example; but he kept his seat with

smiling self-complacency ; while I, finding in my consideration for the mules a present reward, walked now freely up the path, beneath the embracing boughs of its fruit-trees, from which the luxuriant meadows seemed to sink quite to the verge of the snow beyond them. The road next declines to the small, mean, delicious village of Servoz ; and here the procession of *chars-à-banc* overtook me—for three others were now added to the train. Here I expected our priest would have left us, as he had only wished to ride "a little way ;" but I found that he had informed our driver of his perfect satisfaction with his position, and of his intention to shorten a visit he had engaged to pay to a sick sister at Servoz, that he might avail himself of so excellent an opportunity of visiting his brothers at Chamouni. I was puzzled what to do ; I might have transferred my seat to the *char-à-banc*, which my niece and son occupied, but I thought this would seem a direct affront ; to resume my own place, was to destroy the sweetness of an hour which might have no equal to succeed it "in unknown time ;" so I took refuge in the middle course of "walking on ;" and I did "walk on," with great spirit and success ; though, at first, more chafed and vexed than I ought to have been by the continuance of the Catholic visitation. The robust Father little thought—"good easy man"—how much happiness he had marred, or I am sure he could not have thus clouded the fleeting earthly delight which a doomed heretic was permitted to revel in ! He, no doubt, thought—if he thought at all—that he merely made us a little less comfortable during a ten-miles ride—not that he had marred three hours, worth the whole year. I walked stoutly on—"more like a man flying from that he fears, than seeking that he loves"—not in proper charity with the Roman Catholic faith. In this churlish mood, I could not help contrasting the Protestant and Catholic cantons, — the former all cleanliness, industry, and comfort—the latter, dirty, ill-cultivated, speckled in their loveliness by cottages

dark, rotten, tumbling down,—the difference so remarkable, that the crossing a bridge changes these indications of the morals and happiness of the people ; and thinking that if the priests employed the influence they unquestionably possess, in furtherance of objects which their education must have taught them to appreciate, the people who confide body and soul to them, could not continue so palpably below their neighbours, who till fields no more fertile. I confess my meditations at that moment were tinged with no affection for the Roman priesthood ; but I cannot now avoid the inference, arising from the premises that the Catholic priests in the Swiss cantons are culpably neglectful of the moral culture of their flocks,—that they do not teach industry or cleanliness ; for, if they urged the cultivation of these blessings, they would not be so deplorably wanting. As I walked on by the paths fringed with flowery shrubs, and grew at home with beauty, these Protestant thoughts lost their power ; and when I had climbed to a lofty cross, on a bit of common, blooming with heather like that of the Highlands, and saw the cavalcade of carriages so far below me, that I had an hour's good walking before the question of riding with the priest could arise, I cast my ill-humour to the winds, and went on my lonely and lovely way in peace with the Catholic faith. The mountains closed in on the road ; it became steeper and narrower, and ascended into a succession of stony steps ; the pine-groves clasped it, extending upwards to an immense height, and downward precipitously to the river ; until, at last, the crown of the road was attained, and the first spire of the valley of my love, dark among the purple tints of the lower hills, became just visible to my eager eyes. Descending rapidly, I soon found myself directly beneath the lowest skirts of Mont Blanc, and at a sudden turn of the road, in immediate neighbourhood with the purest snow, against which the scarlet berries of the mountain ash, which often enriched the wild-wood, formed a delicious contrast. At the top of one of the path's

eminences I stopped enchanted; a deep rose-coloured light suffused the floating curtain of snow, some of whose vast fields descended to the glacier near me—not a glimpse for a moment—it rested—slowly retreated from the skirts of the mountain upward, and marked out the round, small globe of white, which forms its highest top, by lingering there for some minutes after the domes and pinnacles which, from this point, seemed to equal or excel it in height, were left in cold, grey twilight. When I had walked till I came within a mile of the village of Chamouni, my *char-à-banc* overtook me; I then resumed my place; was able to wonder how the beauty of the evening had seduced me to walk on so far, and, I believe, to play my part with sufficient good humour, to prevent the priest from suspecting that his visit had prolonged my walk. If "all 's well that ends well,"—which cannot be quite true, unless where the *end* is *all*—then was all well with us; for we reached the Hôtel de l'Union, just as the stars were appearing over the mountains, and as the eight o'clock supper or dinner was about to be served; shook hands heartily with our travelling companion, who commended us as his friends to the particular attention of the landlord; and took possession of chambers looking direct on Mont Blanc, with a perfect view of its cloudless top, and a planet, which seemed part of its retinue, almost resting upon it!

CHAPTER III.

A WEEK AT CHAMOUNI.

General description of the Valley of Chamouni—Cascade near Chamouni—The Glacier du Bossons—Mounting Ambition—The Montanvert—Resolution taken to attempt the Ascent of Mont Blanc—Conference with the "Chef" of the Guides—High Preparations—Final Arrangements—Day and Night before the Ascent—Guide's breakfast—Ascent to the Glacier—Passage of the Glacier—The Grands Mulets—Sunset and Night at the Grands Mulets—Ascent to the Grand Plateau—Inglorious Return—Questions whether the attempt was justifiable, and whether it was requited, answered—Walk to the Source of the Arveron.

HERE then we were, in the valley of Chamouni, to "rest and expatiate" for a week—our life apparently without the wrinkle of a care—in an atmosphere without a cloud, except when some light fleecy wreath just floated beneath a dome or pinnacle of Mont Blanc, as if in worship. Before I retrace our rambles within that enchanted region, and the risings and results of that busy ambition which stirred the tranquillity of my golden hours, I will endeavour to recall a general view of the scene—as we became acquainted with its features, by studying them with a loving industry, down to the moment when, from the Col de Balme, we gazed at it in parting.

The valley of Chamouni (to compare a very great thing with a very small one) resembles in shape the half of an almond-shell, a crescent bulged out in the centre, and running almost to a point at each extremity. On my former visit I regarded it merely as the area provided by nature for the perfect exhibition of Mont Blanc; and such is its great office in the economy of the majesties of the world; and to this office I still, as then, think it curiously adapted both by its positive attributes and its wants. The long level of its flooring, not wreathed into various beauty like most of the

Swiss valleys; the predominance of the fir and pine on the skirts of its mountains over more vivid and various trees; and the dark austerity of the Breven, and its associated ridges opposite the glittering miracles of the great mountain, all tend to complete one single, severe, undying impression for the soul of the beholder. But when regarded in detail, this valley will be found endowed with charming characteristics of its own—a sparing grace—a frugally distributed loveliness—which gives it a homefelt interest unknown in valleys crowded and perplexed with beauty which "the sense aches at." Three modest church towers rise from its bosom, each amongst its own cluster of dwellings, but each belonging to the whole, and aiding in the consecration of this table-land among the mountains, which lies almost at a mountain height above the sea. Its space, except where occupied by roads; by its two soapy-coloured rivers; and by the streams that, rushing into them, intersect it like network, is chiefly occupied by small bright farms, each with its nest-like homestead; dotted sometimes with dark groves of trees, only now and then relieved by alder bushes and the dazzling gleam of the scarlet berries of the mountain ash. If you ascend the skirts of Mont Blanc, opposite the summit of the Breven, where the valley is broadest, a little to the left of the church and village of the Prieuré, the expanse of the valley presents a singular and very agreeable appearance, which may be contemplated from this position without any interruption of grander objects, all traces of snow being hidden. Directly before you, from beneath the shaggy peak of the Breven, descends a black gully, up to which a bright tissue of farm-fields, arises from the curving margin of the Arve, in soft regular swell, which forms the sole and slight exception to the flatness of the valley; and the whole presents the appearance of a fan ready for the hand of some gentle giantess, to whom Polyphemus might be a small footpage. The river rims it with a broad edge of waving white; the fields, a hundred at least, green, brown, yellow, of every gradation of tint, lie in expanded patch-work for its opened

folds; dark pines edge the sides, and mark them almost evenly till they meet at the mountain foot; and the gully above, black as ebony, forms the handle which you might fancy the fair Brobdignagian eager to seize. The patches, though of unequal size, are almost all parallelograms, varying from the square to the strip, and evenly defined by their colours; and the cottages of the cultivators are embossed dots on the radiant picture. How cheerful it is! Human industry laughing in contentment at the wastes of eternal snow,—bespeaking a population as industrious as bees! Nothing, surely, could better relieve that tightness about the heart which mountain grandeur at first induces, than such a scene—so peaceful, yet so busy; softening without checking the greatest impulse of admiring wonder—which the snow-clad masses have awakened, and the next hour will renew! To the traveller ascending and descending the Montanvert, this fanlike aspect of the cultivated fields of Chamouni is presented in its happiest perfection.

The morning after our arrival, having lingered in agreeable uncertainty among the scanty groves of dwarf trees which clustered on the margin of the Arve, we started, attended by a guide, to visit the cascade beyond the hamlet of Pelerins and the Glacier du Bossons. An hour's walk, through the field-paths which wind among the farms, and through the thin woods which skirt the nearest fold of Mont Blanc, brought us to a steep open space of hill-side common, clothed with scanty grass, coloured with faint tinges of pink heather, leading to those rocky precipices behind which the loftier declivities of the great mountain are concealed. Down a channel in the rock a stout rivulet rushes, then throws itself across a short perpendicular ledge, and meeting a hollow rock, inclined upwards, leaps high in air, and after forming a wide arch, falls into a chasm—its proper bed—a hundred feet below; a most brilliant *jet-d'eau*, of Nature's own invention. The effect is as beautiful as it is startling. The pure water which thus spurns the earth illumines the air with a million of

drops, which take varying colours in the sunlight, and perpetually form, and break, and renew small rainbows on the pinnacles of stone that spring about its basin, while the water when it reaches in its descent the shade of the chasm, falls in a close column of crystal.

Hence, winding through meadows, corn-fields, and groves, and crossing a broad torrent, which came raging from its imprisonment of ice in the glory of disenchanted life, we reached a châlet, perched on the mountain side, which commanded a view of a portion of the great glacier, which seemed floating down before us at the extremity of a steep ploughed field on which it bordered. We had been charmed by glimpses of its white wonders, as we threaded our upward way through the arches of tall trees, and the blossoming fretwork of shrubs, in delicious contrast with the dark or the vivid green; but now they were full before us. The section of that glacier which is visible, swelling out in its descent from the unseen wastes of snow above to the valley below, is far more beautiful than any I have seen; than the higher regions of the same glacier, which I afterwards traversed, or the floor of the Mer de Glace; far purer than the last, and broken into more exquisite shapes than either. It is perfect in itself—for the snow-fields above are only seen at the edge of its descent, like the water gleaming at the top of a cascade upon the eye beneath it; and the lower extremity, where the ice is always discoloured by its contact with the earth it displaces, is here hidden by a belt of pines. The piece of the glacier thus disclosed, presents a wilderness of fantastic shapes, all of the purest white, purer than marble in its quarry,—slabs like altars, sharp pyramids, broken shafts of columns, spheres, crescents, all confused in the most lucid disorder, which might be the materials lavishly collected for a projected city of fairies. The only prototype I can discern for it in my own mind, is the image I received when, in early school days, I first read the Æneid, of incipient Carthage growing

from facile marble and alabaster into massive grandeur, under the influence of its lovely and fated queen—an impression which a French picture in the Louvre imperfectly renewed. An order for some bread, and a bottle of the red wine of the country, which water and sugar rendered tolerable, secured for our ladies a resting-place beneath a rude porch of the châlet in front of the glacier, while my son and I, attended by the guide, toiled over the arid field to its margin, and climbed, with some difficulty, over the loose heaps of earth and stones which it brings down with it, or loosens at its sides, to walk among its pinnacles. Our distant impression of the stainless beauty of the icy chaos was not impaired by the closest inspection of its shapes; and it was even heightened by the tints of the crevices, which run like serpents among the dazzling region—which at the rim are of very pale blue, and deepen as they descend into azure, and are then lost in deep gloom; and by the small sun-tinted icicles hanging down from the sculptured edge of the greater forms, like "young diamonds in their early dew." The sun's heat, which the ice-forms seemed not so much to defy as to rejoice in, soon drove us back to our ladies, with whom we gently strolled downward through the trees, casting many a glance at the radiant forms which gleamed more exquisite from their contrast with the green framework; to the road, and thence to our hotel, which we reached in good time for the five o'clock dinner. This repast was followed by another delicious evening, during which we again saw the summit of Mont Blanc vindicate its supremacy over the Dôme du Gouté, and other its attendant tops, by retaining the crowning pink after it had quitted them; and another night during which the stars shone over the watch-tower *Aiguilles*, without the intervention of even a fleece of cloud.

What could disturb tranquillity so deep? There were thoughts of restless ambition, which stirred this repose and awoke the fever in the heart. That "something still which

prompts the eternal sigh "—the thirst not of happiness but of action, was not subdued amidst these silent solitudes. I gazed on the Dôme du Gouté and the summit; and panted with a child-like longing to exchange the Platonic love of these celestial domes for a substantial acquaintance, and even to try the ascent to the highest summit. For many years I had been fascinated, almost haunted, by the idea of this enterprise; and had read every printed narrative of the attempt I could procure, from that of Saussure down to those of Jackson, Shervill and Auldjo, with an avidity I can scarcely explain. It was not the desire of a panoramic view from the summit, for in that it must be surpassed by many inferior elevations—nor (I think at least) the idler desire to boast, that I had stood on the highest ground in Europe; but a wish, amounting almost to a passion, to become familiar with the steeps and the recesses of the mountain of Europe, and to blend the sense of adventure with the enjoyment of the mightiest scenery. There is something in the influence of an object, a great and exciting object—not one requiring attention to minute details—like geology or botany—to which the discovery of grandeur and beauty is accessory, which puts a life into the heart of contemplation, and unites the animation of struggle with the embracement of images of the profoundest peace. The fatigues and the dangers attributed to the attempt increased its fascination,—not being associated with scenes of violence but with the noblest images—the wide waste of snow, the avalanche, the chasm, the precipice—as if the mind, in the wrestle with the silent perils of the universe, could acquire some mysterious participation with its powers. Perhaps, also, the consciousness of being particularly unfitted for such an exploit; boasting no muscular strength; jaded with far other labours; and having been as much *untrained* for climbing and sliding as habits of town-life could make me; so that, if I should succeed, the sense of triumph would be enhanced, while my failure would be without disgrace. I

looked on my chance of success as if I were deliberating on the purchase of a ticket in a lottery; the prize rose in estimation exactly in proportion to the chances against winning it; all reason and experience were against me; so "masterless passion," which "sways us to its will in what it likes or loathes," took the other side of the question, and vindicated its triumphant attributes. I taught myself to believe, that I might find some extraordinary strength in the bracing air of the upper region; the snowy wonders of the path might inspire me with strange animation; and if obliged to return, I should have acquired some knowledge of the way, and the conviction that I had not lost an opportunity which might never recur. So I half resolved to set forward—with about as reasonable a hope of complete success as that with which Fortunio starts in the Arabian Tale to procure the fairy gifts for the golden-haired princess; but *he* succeeded in spite of all visionary fears; and why in this fairy land should not I?

All external circumstances tended to foster this desire as soon as I began to cherish it. Time, place, season, all cohered—if ever the ascent could be accomplished it was now. The weather was almost cloudless; it had been fine for many days, and seemed settled for many more; the upper regions of the mountain were reported to be in a state more favourable to the intrusion of human steps than had ever been remembered, in consequence of the quantity of snow which had fallen early in the year, and which had been hardened before the summer heat; and several attempts had been recently crowned with success. One had been completed this day by Mr. Nicholson, of Doctors' Commons, a guest of our inn, who, on his return, was greeted by repeated discharges of petards fired from the garden by our host. He had started the preceding morning; and arrived from the top not only in time to partake of the dinner at five o'clock, but in spirits and with strength to enjoy the congratulations of the company, to whom he

detailed most inspiriting passages of his progress, with an eloquence almost as vivid as his sketches, by which I have ever been charmed. He had been joined, among others, by the Abbé of the Prieuré, who had been tempted, by the peculiar felicities of the season, to ascend the mountain at the foot of which he had lived and ministered for many years, and who, on his return, was welcomed by reiterated volleys from all the hotels. Mr. Nicholson told us how the good man had performed the evening service before the party composed themselves to rest on the rocks of the Grands Mulets; and how impressive it was in that lofty solitude even to Protestant feelings; thus seeming at least to give the sanction of experience and piety to an enterprise which had been often represented as foolish if not criminal. Thus all things, except common sense and discretion—qualities, opposed to such temptations, much less than nothing—conspired to induce me to grasp at the fervent dream of past years; and when I found myself discussing the possibility of the attempt with the ladies, without encountering any prohibition or raising any apparent alarm, I almost resolved to make it.

Although thus dallying with the suggestions of mounting ambition, I did not lose the next day in lofty speculation, but spent the morning with my party in a visit to the Montanvert, attended by all proper appliances of mules and guides, and acquired a knowledge of the facilities of the way which would enable us, if we should ever take it again, to dispense with both. Ascending the mountain path, fringed with brushwood to the pine grove, and winding through it among frequent traces of torrent ruin, I was chiefly delighted by the mapped out fields of Chamouni, which I have endeavoured to sketch, below me, and the spiral tower of the beautiful Aiguille du Dru, which at every interval of open slope rose before us with its soft cream-colour hue and shape of matchless elegance. Along this hill-side path you perceive no indication of ice or snow;

the opposite ridge of the valley sinks, as you advance, from the black watch-tower of the Breven, to the *Roches rouges* surmounting the Flegère, and thence almost to pastoral tameness; and you have leisure to notice the small crimson strawberry peeping out from the roots of the dwarf shrubs and amidst loose stones, and the low purple flowers which almost *star* the paths. Thus cheered, and awed by the riot of the Arveron far below, which here has just issued from its native cave of ice, you come suddenly upon the Pavilion of the Montanvert—a low strong-built cottage—and look directly down upon the frozen sea below it, as on a bay or pool almost circled by snow-capt rocks, while its crowning ornament, the Aiguille du Dru, rises immediately before you. We descended on the face of a steep bank to the ice, and walked on it for some distance, beside the stone which sheltered the first English visiters of the region. The ice, here unclothed by snow, was so painfully slippery, as to suggest doubts whether I could even pass the Glacier du Bossons, and this "gave me pause" in my half-formed scheme. As the day had too far advanced to render it possible to penetrate the recesses of the frozen road to the Jardin, we re-ascended to the Montanvert, where the best view of the icy vale was obtained. The scene here presented is, in shape, almost a circular basin or amphitheatre, —the onward course of the glacier being concealed by the folds of the rocks—and seems to my recollection to be imbued with even more beauty than grandeur; for its floor is formed of sheets of waving ice, which, except that it is broken here and there by the glistening blue of a crevice, has all the freedom of actual motion; the rocks circling it, splintered into fantastic varieties of summit, harmonize remarkably in colour with the ice, and are dwarfed by the dizzy heights beyond them; and the Aiguille du Dru, rising in the shape of a cone of pale brown, looks like the spirit of beauty, shedding its influences on all beneath it. Such, indeed, was the beautiful predominance of the circular form,

and so entire the absence of anything discordant, that I believe the picture was diminished to the eye by a sense of harmony, akin to that which breathes from the most perfect statues.

On our return we were overtaken by the variety of a sudden shower, pouring down like a waterspout from a single cloud, which, threatening a change of weather, seemed to destroy my wavering purpose; yet that shower fixed it. When I thought the scheme blasted, I felt the strong hold it had taken of me; and in my regrets for the opportunity lost, found irresistible reasons for embracing it when the possibility was renewed. This soon occurred; before dinner every cloud had passed away: the setting sun cast, if possible, richer hues, first of gold, then of pink, upon the lofty snows than ever; and as soon as they vanished, my resolution was taken; communicated; confirmed. One important consideration remained; my son, naturally desirous of sharing in an enterprise better suited to his years and experience than mine, with an earnestness befitting the occasion, desired to share my fortunes. No intention of risking anything so precious in the service of the Genii of the mountain had entered my mind; but I had persuaded myself that there was no risk for me, and I could not afford to lose that persuasion by confessing that there was danger for him: and then the thought that he was more likely to succeed than I; that his success would compensate for my failure; and that he might lift up his head higher at the *Montem*, among the plumes that make the little mound at Salt Hill wave like one gigantic helmet, for the elevation attained at Chamouni; so I assented to his wish. Our landlord was deeply interested in his success by a remark of his mother—that if he attained the summit, seven hundred schoolboys would insist on visiting Chamouni to follow his steps, and make the fortune of the hotels. Seven hundred schoolboys—"the first," as he truly said, "in the world," following his example, might track a

pathway to the summit, and put the mountain itself to school!

Being now "settled and bound up, each corporal agent to this terrible feat," I sought "The Chef" of the Guides, to hold solemn conference on the ways and means. He is the Lord Chamberlain, who licenses and regulates all such performances; absolute over all the details and decorums and costs of the expedition; and generally finding subjects so obedient, as to prove worthy of the blessings of that best of all smaller governments, a well-administered despotism. When we sought him at his office, which is next door to "a real chamois," who is always at home—of course he was not at home, and for some time we looked for him in vain among the groups of inferior guides and mule-drivers, who were lounging in the twilight about the road and the openings of the narrow streets, diversified but not relieved by a sprinkling of English grooms, whose natural indolence was not diminished by an inability to converse with their fellow-stablers, and who stood about with their hands in their pockets, yawning with all their souls—the pictures of vulgar *ennui*;—an assemblage abhorrent to the romance which was within me. At last one of the real guides, who had some suspicion of our purpose, and was anxious to procure an appointment on our staff, brought the Potentate to us. As soon as he understood our serious business, he "with courteous action waved us to a more removed ground," and leading the way from the throng of idlers, laid down his short pipe, and took his seat, on the dwarf wall of the churchyard, to give us audience. He was a thick-set, grave, middle-aged man, who, though coarsely dressed in fustian trousers and a short shabby jacket, wore an air of authority; and was obviously disposed to treat the projected ascent with that solemnity with which all Chamouni have conspired to invest it. He, however, strongly encouraged us to proceed; assured us that the season was favourable beyond any in his recollection; that the snow was never so

accessible; and, in answer to my inquiries whether the young gentleman would be equal to the effort, expressed his opinion in his favour, though he added that if he succeeded, he would be the youngest who ever had mounted so high; a suggestion which did not diminish the young gentleman's ardour for the trial. When, however, he came to question us, in his turn, as to the state of our wardrobe, it was found to be miserably deficient; our boots were not only unfit for the ice, but scarcely worthy to carry us to its margin, and our clothes were mere gossamer. Some things we might buy; some we might borrow; but shoes must be manufactured for us in the course of the next day; for on the morning after that we proposed to set forth. The Chef looked awful; but said he would see if it was possible, and if it was possible, it should be done; and conducted us through a range of very respectable pigsties and less respectable cottages to a cell of a shop where a begrimed cordwainer, looking like a genuine burgess of Stafford, held his state. He too, as many a Stafford cordwainer has done at first sight, shook his head and declared compliance impossible; but, like many a Stafford cordwainer, he was not insensible to reason properly administered. The Chef explained that we were willing to pay handsomely; and Crispin grew gentle, and took our measures, and promised the Mont Blanc shoes for the following evening; and our pledged friend, as his Stafford kinsmen do, except under strong temptation, kept his word; for soon after dinner on the next day he attended at the hotel with two pairs of shoes, such as I had never seen even in a dream—within, admirably fitted to the wearers—and without, rough with more hob-nails than the Senior Alderman, who has not passed the chair, counts in her Majesty's Court of Exchequer. Under the superintendence of our Chef, who now took us under his charge, as Tristan in Quentin Durward does "his gossips," we visited various small shops and procured wide out-spreading straw hats, green veils, enormous

worsted stockings (things to dream of not to tell), and borrowed green spectacles, which we were told were indispensable as protectors against the glare of the snow ; but which I found of no more use than those which formed Moses Primrose's immortal purchase. Although we were desirous of keeping our purpose as secret as possible, to avoid being remonstrated with, or stared at, or pitied, the experienced eye of Mr. Nicholson discovered it in the manner in which our Chef resumed his pipe after he quitted us ; and although he did not even know our names, felt such sympathy with our ambition to rival his own exploit, that he offered us all the aid his wardrobe could supply ; so that before we went to bed we were supplied with various flannel habiliments, cloaks, and other appliances for the upper regions, if we should be so happy as to reach them. One of the *garçons* of the hotel, who had accompanied our new friend and shared his success, exhibited woeful marks in his eyes and face of the inclemency of the climate, which he accounted for, in his broken English, by saying, " It is very fine upstairs ; very fine ; but upstairs I lost my head." I gathered from his gesture, and finger pointed to the summit of Mont Blanc, visible from the window by which we were standing, that " *upstairs* " with him implied the greatest sublimity he could express in English, and meant the mountain-top ; but the " loss of head " I erroneously attributed to some fearful aberration on a giddy precipice ; but, when explained, it proved to refer to the loss of his straw hat, which escaped from the fragility of its domestic ties on the very top of the mountain, whither he had been half dragged, half carried by the guides, and spindled down with a million revolutions into the vale of Aosta, leaving the poor youth with no protection against the glare of sun and snow beyond that which a pocket-handkerchief could give. He had suffered severely ; but we were far past all warning ; and sending again for the Chef, before we retired to rest, received his sanction to the apparel our new and kind friend

had provided for us; and, by Mr. Nicholson's advice, left the selection of the guides unreservedly to the Chef's direction. We were to have four principal attendants a piece, each of whom was to receive a hundred francs if his client reached the summit; seventy-five if he only reached the Grand Plateau; and fifty if he only reached the Grands Mulets, the resting-place of the first day's journey:—prices raised since Dr. Hamel's attempt, when forty-eight francs for each guide was the sum agreed on; but I think not a franc too much for the peculiar aid and comfort the guides render. These prices were independent of a gratuity of from ten to twenty francs more, which the aspirant, or patient, if satisfied with his guides (as he always ought to be), is expected to give to each. The Chef receives nothing from the traveller; but a handsome per centage on the pay of the guides, which gives him, no doubt, an interest in every expedition. Besides the regular guides, we were to be attended by two porters, to carry provisions and clothing as far as the Grands Mulets, who were to receive about twenty francs a piece, with an addition if we found it convenient to take them further. Provisions, a very important part of the arrangement, were to be supplied, at his discretion, by the master of the hotel, who was perfectly acquainted with all that was desirable—or assumed to be desirable—for the sustentation and solace of travellers and guides. All matters being thus put in train, I went to bed to dream of all sorts of icy terrors; waking at one time under the weight of an avalanche of a thousand tons of ice, and at another half way down a precipice, in a falling progress of a thousand fathoms.

The day which intervened "between the acting of this dreadful thing and the first motion," though not quite "a phantasm, a hideous dream," was still a lost day, and being an exceedingly beautiful one, I account the greatest loss I suffered for my rashness. The usual consequence of taking a decisive step followed; fears and scruples mul-

tiplied; and though they were silenced by the real belief, which the event justified, that in the state of the snows, nothing was to be apprehended beyond fatigue, and the necessity of returning: still restlessness and languor spoiled the radiant hours, which it was thought imprudent to employ in any laborious exercise. My wife and I spent a portion of the morning on a grassy bank, scantily shaded, on the stony margin of the Arve; during which a pretty little ragged Savoyard boy peeped in at us, and having satisfied his curiosity, stationed himself among the stones and dust left by the river, and exhibited all the attitudes of weariness of a small "Exquisite," which, being as lazy as he, we idly watched. When we rose to go, the little fellow came forward, and held out his hand to be paid; as if he had earned something by lounging in our presence so long, though his plump figure bespoke no need of alms. The young idea of acquisition from strangers unfolds itself early here; a meanness which, I am afraid, English travellers have taught the lads and lasses of the valley. They do not beg, indeed, after the coarse fashion of the mendicants of the Bernese Oberland—arresting your steps, almost with menaces, and often exhibiting hideous deformities at which you shudder—but they display some prettiness in action or manner; offer you a draught of milk, or some water from a spring; or a bunch of flowers; or, like our young posture-master, merely present themselves in any interesting attitude; and then await their reward. All the children are pretty, some lovely; the girls grow up pretty, and only become coarse and withered as their active labours in the farm-house and in the sun (in both of which they bear more than an equal share of toil) affect them; but the boys grow up coarse and clownish; or rather they do not grow up, but stop in their growth at fifteen or sixteen, and after that appear stunted and down-looking; though I believe them honest, and as simple-hearted as our demoralising bribery permits. The graces of courtesy are native here;

I am afraid we have rendered them venal. You cannot take a walk in any direction, towards an object of known attraction—the Montanvert, the Flegère, the Chapeau, the source of the Arveron, without meeting a pretty girl, with some pretty offering, very prettily offered; which, if really intended as a gift, would be very pretty, but which loses all its charm, and half its grace, when the dark-brown eyes are turned up with an asking expression, and the venal courtesy is ready at your service.

On my return to the hotel, Mr. Bosworth, an English gentleman, who, with his sister and a friend, was staying there, made a welcome proposal to join our party for the morrow. He had made the attempt last year, and had nearly reached the summit, when he was driven back by a sudden storm, which so loosened the upper snow as to render it impossible to proceed; and his steadiness of nerve and kindness were of great use, and still greater comfort, to us. Joseph Marie Coutet, one of the guides who attended Dr. Hamel on his disastrous expedition, and whose father accompanied Saussure on his first ascent, had been chosen by him as one of his guides; and to his general superintendence we agreed to commit the conduct of our joint adventure. In the evening, two young gentlemen, guests of the Hôtel de Londres, agreed to start in company with our party—keeping, however, all their own arrangements, and leaving us to ours; which now—except in the provisional department confided to our host—might be regarded as complete.

I did not sleep so much as could be wished, on the eve of unusual exertion; but for this there was no remedy; and the dark hours seemed very long. Nor, indeed, was I the only watcher; all night the kitchen of the hotel was the scene of activity only paralleled on similar occasions; half a hecatomb of chickens, at the least, who had been sacrificed to the Genius of the Mountain, took their turns on the unresisting spit; hams and legs of mutton simmered in

huge pots ; and other viands were preparing for our entertainment in the upward regions, and the preliminary breakfast of the guides ; all was bustle, as if a rent audit or a borough election had been in prospect. It is the policy, perhaps the sentiment of universal Chamouni, to invest the ascent of Mont Blanc with all sorts of adventitious importance ; it is an event in the valley's history ;—the guides look abstracted ; porters step with a solemn air ; and even the stable-boys, who harness the mules, assume a dignity. At last, however, the morning dawned ; the stainless object of our ambition, which had frightfully glistened on me in my broken slumber, reposed in cold purity, amidst the grey cloudless sky. All the guides engaged in the expedition attended early mass in the church, which was crowded, at six o'clock ; and I felt a relief in witnessing, and to some extent joining in, the service. Having taken some tea, and trifled over an egg, I put on my ponderous shoes, which were necessary in passing the glacier ; in other respects, our dress was of its ordinary slightness—all our weightier apparel being committed to the porters' care. Our ladies, with kind consideration, declined to witness our departure ; so before the time came, they departed to see my brother, whom we had unexpectedly met the preceding evening here, travelling to Rome, on his way towards Martigny, in the opposite direction, after a leave-taking into which I threw a slight swagger, having quietly confided to my niece my purse, and the key of the small desk in which our money and passport were deposited—of course, only because I could have no use for such things on the summit. When they had left us, I went to look at the solemn breakfast of the assembled guides and porters of our united parties, which was really a striking scene ; and is evermore the prologue to the great attempt—of course at the expense of the "voyageurs." In the broad covered balcony, which occupies one side of the hotel at its first floor, the table was spread, and covered with no bread-and-butter mockeries—

huge joints of mutton and ham, flanked by enormous wedges of brown bread, were in the course of active consumption ; and tumblers, more or less filled with the deep red wine of the country, were in constant use. The table was quite full of guides and porters, all fully equipped like foragers for a long march ; two or three, who could not find places, were standing at the extremities of the table, and filled up the space with their eager figures. Still there was a purpose in the wild group, which, though differently expressed, pervaded all. The veterans looked grave, and ate in silence ; two bright-eyed lads, who had yet their laurels to win, tossed off their wine with a gay reckless air ; and the porters ate, as if eating was the only care or duty in the world. They looked altogether not unlike festive banditti in a melo-drama. They all rose when I was discerned, and drank my health and success ; and Julien Devouessou, who was my own peculiar guide, or body-guardian, begged me to take a glass with them in return. I did so, with a careless air enough ; but touched parched lips with the brimming glass, and hurried off to be for a moment alone. I felt a resemblance in my position—sharing the glory and the terror of imaginary heroism—to Conachar, in "The Fair Maid of Perth," clothed in all the attributes of chieftainship, fêted, and dressed, and armed, as if for combat, but having the fearful consciousness within of a spirit unequal to its office—one of the boldest and most affecting creations of novelist or poet. With me, however, as with him, it was "too late ;" retreat was, or seemed impossible ; so I kept up the show of bravery, with a sort of desperate hope that something would turn up to help me to the summit ; though what that something was I did not inquire.

And now Julien knocked at my chamber door, and told me that all was ready. I descended, and found a very picturesque crowd filling the space before the inn, as the adventurers from the rival hotel, with their attendants, were assembled. My son, as well as they, was already mounted,

each with a huge straw hat on head, and a long spiked pole in hand ; the guides, twenty in number, had all also poles and soldier-like knapsacks ; the porters, six or eight in number, bent beneath the weight of their loads ; idlers of all ages, stable-boys, grooms, men, women, and children, filled up the scene ; and the windows of the hotel were lined with guests, who had just learned the cause of the bustle. It was exactly eight o'clock when I took my lance in hand, and set forward on my mule, accompanied by all the adventurers, except Mr. Bosworth, who walked with his sister and friend, beside his mule, till the crowd had left us. I feared they would hang on the skirts of our journey, but was happy to find, when we had crossed the bridge over the Arve, that the road was occupied only by our procession. We proceeded leisurely along the road to the hamlet of Pelerins, where Mr. Bosworth took his farewell of his sister, and mounted his mule ; and our ranks were complete. The cottagers, at every farm we passed, came out and waved their good wishes, with evident interest in the attempt, which is *the* event of their simple annals ; and the pretty girls dropped their prettiest curtsies, without wishing to be paid for them. From the hamlet we turned upwards through the pine-wood, thence emerged on the blazing hill-side, and bent our way upwards, with no other deviations but those which the steepness of the declivity rendered needful, until scanty trees gave place to scantier shrubs—shrubs to furze bushes—these grew rare among wastes of stones, until nothing remained but scanty grass and mosses to tell of the luxuriant world below us. My mule was not so docile as the Chamouni mules usually are, or I was too much wrapt in my own thoughts to give him attention ; for while there was a tree or a shrub against which he could bear me, he did so, and at last became so entangled in the boughs of a tree which hung over an awful declivity, that I was, or thought myself, obliged to throw myself off, lest he should plunge with me down the steep, and only saved myself from

falling to a considerable depth among the rocks, by catching a furze-bush on the edge. This was, I believe, my greatest real peril of the attempt; and yet this should not be attributed to it as a peculiar danger, for the same accident might have occurred with a similar animal, in the ordinary route to the Montanvert or the Flegère. I declined mounting again, and was glad when the difficulties of the ground induced all my companions to abandon their mules to the care of the small people who tended them, which happened before we reached the region of total sterility, and we then addressed ourselves in earnest to our *work;* for such even Mr. Carlyle would allow to be its proper designation.

Half an hour's scrambling among rocks and loose stones brought us to the edge of a deep defile through which a stream, gushing from the glacier unseen beyond, foamed at a fearful depth below us. As we painfully ascended, we rose above the source of this stream, which we saw gushing down the opposite bank, and entered the interior of the ravine. The depth was, at first, cheered by a small pure rivulet, which cherished scanty grass, and a shrub or two, and a clump of flowers,—unlooked for reliefs in this stony solitude, and to which I had bidden adieu;—but we rose above the bubbling fountain of this rill; and then the fringe of grass ceased, but the purple monkshood still waved bravely above the large stones, and a small yellow flower now and then peeped out from beneath their shelter. These, at length, finally disappeared; and the huge gully stretched before us, stony and steep, shutting out all prospect and blazing with heat. This was the most physically toilsome walking I had ever yet encountered; and but for the cheering looks and actions of the guides, I should here have given up the attempt in despair. My younger companions, however, were quite fresh and vigorous; and hurried on, with needless and I thought indiscreet haste, to the entrance of the glacier, while I toiled on at a slower pace with two of my guides. I was encouraged to persevere by the

assurance that the passage of the glacier would be much less laborious than the half scrambling, half climbing, up the gully in which I was engaged; and so I found it. After one heavy struggle over a mound of rubbish, and then over some huge blocks of dirty ice, I attained the pure floor of the glacier, and experienced a delightful and invigorating change from the stony wilderness up which I had laboured. I found the passage of the glacier so strangely unlike the representations given in the published accounts of previous ascents, that I cannot doubt but that a great, though perhaps transitory, alteration had occurred in its surface. In every account I have read, it has been represented, with more or less minuteness of detail, as fearfully rugged; not only intersected with frequent crevices, but blocked up with walls and turrets of ice, and only to be surmounted by frequent climbing; not unlike, indeed, its actual condition at that lower point of swelling descent which I had previously visited, and which it seemed to me impossible to traverse.*

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* The companion of Dr. Hamel, whose deeply interesting account of his ascent will be found in the New Monthly Magazine, vol. i. 156, thus describes the aspect of the glacier, and the passage through its wonders.

"The Mer de Glace, which has been compared to a sea suddenly congealed in the midst of a storm, cannot, our guides assured us, enter into competition with it. The fissures were so great, so wide, and so deep—the different views varying every instant presents, are so awful, so fantastic, that no idea of them can be presented to the mind by the most eloquent pen. At one time the traveller finds himself denied apparently all further progress by an immense, precipitous tower of ice; this is surmounted by a staircase of notches, which one of the guides cuts in the ice with a hatchet which he carries for the purpose. Then he must descend into an awful chasm, from which he emerges in like manner. Again he meets with fissures, called by the guides *crevasses*, of uncertain depths, which are crossed by laying the ladder over them and passing on all-fours."

Captain Markham Sherwill, who, with Dr. Clarke, ascended Mont Blanc, with success, on 25th, 26th, and 27th August, 1825, and whose narrative was to me at least of great interest, thus describes his passage over the glacier:—

"On proceeding over the terrific Glacier des Bossons, strict injunctions were given to us by the guides not to deviate from the track of the two leading men, who continued to sound the snow with their poles, before they set their feet down. The utmost caution and prudence are necessary in this respect, for in a thousand places over which we passed, we found

Whatever it may have been, or may become hereafter, its surface presented to me nothing more formidable than a huge waste of the purest frozen snow, spread amidst enormous rocks, tending upwards at a steep but not dangerous elevation, and riven in parts by irregular crevices, which alone remained to justify the terrific descriptions of former aspirants; and even these were rarely broad enough to be terrible. Its first aspect was that of an immense white sheet, which might have been let down from heaven, puckered up and fastened at irregular heights to the rocks which bounded each side of the prospect, and floating down

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nothing to walk on but an overhanging drift or shelf of snow, which partially hid from our view caverns and crevices of from one hundred to two hundred feet deep. In case the first guide should suddenly fall into one of the depths, the object of the rope by which he is affixed to the second is apparent; for he, being in advance eight or ten paces, is immediately held up by the other, until sufficient aid can be afforded by the whole party to save him from destruction. We, therefore, continued in a single line, following the footsteps of our foremost man. These drifts of overhanging snow are denominated bridges by the guides, but in many cases they do not allow more than one person to cross them at a time, as the additional weight of a second might destroy the ridge, and thus cut off the communication of the party, at least for a considerable time. Your pole is your only support, a slow and steady step essential, and your eye must carefully guide your foot, never varying your step from the track the leading guides have made.

"We continued to cross the majestic though frightful glacier during four hours. Occasionally we were detained a quarter of an hour, and oftentimes more, standing in the snow nearly up to our knees, while the foremost guides were actively employed in cutting steps with the hatchet in the almost perpendicular walls of ice. These walls are in fact the sides of the crevices in the glaciers, such as you must remember to have seen in the Mer de Glace; but the Mer de Glace, compared to the rugged chasms and crevices of the Glacier des Bossons, is scarcely rougher than a plain gravel walk or a frozen pond. Our difficulties increased as we continued to advance on this fearful glacier. The crevices became considerably wider than we had hitherto found them, and irregularities on the surface of the ice very troublesome and perplexing. These crevices presented themselves at every twenty or thirty paces, and often the narrow walls of ice which divided them were so slippery that it required the utmost care and caution to walk along their edge. The depth of these we could not at all times measure, except in cases where we descended into them, in order to avoid a long circuitous route, which might have terminated in similar difficulties; in such a case, after descending we mounted the opposite wall. The deeper we found the crevices, the darker was the shade of green which we observed in the ice; and particularly, in looking into the arched caverns, we noticed that the colour was still darker."

gracefully from its fastenings. Towards the edges, indeed, when it came in contact with the rocks in which it is thus imbedded, there appeared, on a near approach, vast walls and columns and tables of ice, which sometimes looked as if they grew out of the rock; these were pierced by caverns of the purest white, sometimes draped with icicles, and embossed with fantastic shapes; little chapels of exquisite tracery in which altars were not wanting; recesses as beautiful in their dazzling fragility, as the Cave of Fingal at Staffa in the sculptured beauty of its roof, and the sable majesty of its unperishing columns. But the field of the glacier, except where split by crevices, presented no obstacle to ordinary up-hill walking, beyond the annoyance of being sometimes shoe-deep in the loosened snow, and the slipperiness betrayed by a brighter glistening, which the nailed shoes and spiked pole would have enabled me to encounter, even if the arm of the guide had not been always ready to anticipate the least need of assistance.

I had scarcely entered on the glacier, when I was delighted to observe all my brisker comrades at a dead stop; they had far outstripped me and my guides in the ascent of the stony region; and I was glad of any temporary obstacle which enabled me to rejoin them. I found them on the brink of the first and most formidable—indeed the only really formidable—crevice of the glacier, a jagged slit of about seven or eight yards in width at the opening, narrowing as it slanted downwards, and deepening in colour from the loveliest pale green into darkness; while, from a hundred fathoms below, the sound of rushing water was heard, as if a subterraneous river was forcing a way through the foundations of the glacier. Across this gulf stretched a narrow wall of ice, connecting our side with that beyond; and over this we were to pass it, unless we would make an experimental circuit, of unknown extent, to find a termination of the crevice; and when I arrived, I found everything prepared for the passage. Some of the guides

already stood on the opposite brink, one of whom held a rope, while another guide held it on our side, and so formed a rail; holding by which, we one by one crossed in safety. The narrowness of this ledge may be guessed by the exploit which one young gentleman performed; who, instead of walking, placed himself astride upon it, and directing the rope to be lowered to suit his equestrian position, drew himself along, amidst the cheers and laughter of the spectators. I was astonished then, I am puzzled now, at the real composure with which I performed my own part; for, though generally affected with distressing dizziness on any height although assured of perfect safety, I felt here no apprehension; no sinking of the heart; not a qualm. I can account for this only by the extreme beauty of the colours of the chasm itself; its purity and celestial loveliness; which absorbed the sense of danger; so that "its beauty" did not "make me effeminate," but for the moment brave. I met with no similar opportunity either of testing or signalizing my courage; for the other crevices in my path were only such as could be stepped or lightly leaped over, aided by the ready arm of the guide, which felt like a wall of rock. Being now on this "fair field," my younger and more active friends left me again behind, and I found myself alone in the midst of this wide snow desert; for though I was attended by two guides—Julien, who was properly mine, and Coutet, who owed his allegiance to Mr. Bosworth, but who probably remained with me in commiseration of my greater need—I did not understand their French nor they my English; so that no word broke the silence which, undisturbed even by an insect's wing, was only made more fearful by the half-stifled sound of subterraneous waters which sometimes murmured on the ear. All the encouragement, however, that kind looks, courteous actions, and seasonable help could render, was amply bestowed. I needed all their influences; for though the icy track was to me far more tolerable than the contest with

the earth and stones, after the first relief of contrast had been enjoyed, my strength grew less; and the heat parched me with thirst, which the guides, by very expressive pantomime, forbade me to relieve by swallowing the crisp snow which offered itself to me at every weary step. A delightful relief came, however, before I had looked for any. As we were ascending near the verge of the glacier, in sight of some of those border chapels and oratories which arose fantastic in the ice, Coutet leaped into a small cavern, which opened at one side, a little below the level of our track; produced a tumbler from his knapsack, filled it from a little alabaster basin, which, hollowed in a slab of ice, received a trickling thread of water bursting from the cavern side, and presented it to me with a light merry laugh, which said, as plain as words, "There! did you ever taste any drink like this?" Assuredly, I never did—clear as crystal—cold as ice, to my feverish lips and throat it seemed nectar; and I was rejoiced indeed when my conductor filled a second glass and offered it to me, as a reward for my abstinence from the unlawful snow. Some of the happiest draughts I ever quaffed ran over my memory, in sparkling distinctness; but I recollected none equal to this. As we resumed our walk, with strength which, for a minute, seemed equal to any labour, I seemed to renew some of those—the champagne I have found ready iced, awaiting me and some delightful companions, after walks of twelve or fifteen miles by the banks of the Wye in glorious summer days—of the whiskey which had heightened the exhilaration of that moment when, having achieved the pinnacle of Snowdon, I drew in my first draught of mountain gladness—of old port drunk in old times with old friends, when life was young, and port wine shed flavours on the memory which it may never again afford to the taste—of porter drunk from the proper material, after the glorious heat and pressure of the pit of Covent Garden Theatre, on one of Mr. Kemble's farewell nights, or some bright reappearance of Mrs. Siddons, when the fall of

the curtain on the completed tragedy left the spectator able to feel all the thirst which the pressure at the door and its succeeding heats had accumulated, but which a nobler thirst had suspended till then; but these draughts surpassed all. For the first time (possibly the last) I thought of Father Mathew not only with respect, but with sympathy; and, if a third glass had been permitted, would have drunk it to his health. But, alas! there may be "too much of water," as well as of stouter drinks; and Coutet, after the second, had replaced his cup in his knapsack with an air which told me I must have no more; but I went on in brief vigour. Too brief; for though the recollection of the draughts remained, and even grew more vivid, as I went on, the strength they seemed to give soon vanished; and I toiled up the snow as slowly and painfully as before I had drained them. I usually now leaned on the arm of Julien on one side, and on my pole on the other; sometimes, when the way was very steep, each guide held his pole beside me, and I walked on leaning on each. Thus I proceeded till I thought I could proceed no further; when a shout of welcome rang through the snowy field, and resounded in echoes from the lofty tops; and our rocks of refuge, the Grands Mulets, all manned by our friends, rose black and cheerful before us. The ascent from the snow to the resting-place, which is described as so difficult and perilous by former adventurers,* was not difficult now,

* Dr. Hamel's companion thus describes the ascent of the Grands Mulets:—"After proceeding in this way for about an hour we arrived by a steep slope at the base of the Grands Mulets, a name given to a ridge of rocks, or rather a single rock, which rises almost perpendicularly to a great height out of the eternal snow which surrounds it on all sides, and which is, from the nature of its construction, generally bare of snow itself. In ascending this ridge we had a new species of danger to contend with. Our steps were all upon loose fragments of the rock, which was schistous. These occasionally gave way beneath our tread, and fell with tremendous noise into the depths below. Owing, however, to the caution of our excellent guides, who perpetually warned us against suspicious stones, we surmounted this perilous ascent without any accident. Once or twice, indeed, a few stones from above alarmed us by whizzing past us, but some one of the guides, being constantly on the look-out, advertised us in time of the

except to my extreme fatigue. I can only account for this facility, and that of the passage over the glacier, by supposing that the snow of early spring had buried beneath it many of those brilliant inequalities, which had rendered it so difficult; and, by raising the level of the glacier, had diminished the ascent of the rocks. Instead of an hour, which it cost Dr. Hamel's party to surmount it, ten minutes' scrambling was sufficient for me, tired as I was; and of perils I saw and felt none. After a little crawling among loose stones, then a little winding among the rough galleries of the rock, I found my hand grasped by that of my son, and sank down utterly exhausted on the ledge which was to serve for our dining-room and our couch. He speedily administered to me a beaker of excellent claret which had been supplied by our host for our peculiar use—only inferior to the water of the ice-cave—and which so revived me that, in a few minutes, I was able to contemplate and enjoy the matchless glories of our position.

The Grands Mulets are (or at least *were* when I sojourned upon them) a narrow chain of dark granite rocks, which break out from the mantle of snow that clothes the exterior of the mountain, terminating in an abrupt declivity, directly opposite to the valley of Chamouni; which have, on their western side, ledges sufficiently level and protected at the back to serve for a traveller's rest. Their name is said to have originated from a fancied resemblance of their aspect as surveyed from the valley to a team of mules; to me they appeared, from the same point of vision, rather to

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danger, which we evaded by crouching down in some of the hollows. On the whole, we found the ascent of the rock less formidable than we had anticipated from its first appearance; for, though we occasionally had to climb round projecting points where we seemed to be suspended in mid-air, yet for the most part a false step would have only carried us down to some shelf a few feet lower, which would have received us. I must except, however, the last twenty or thirty yards, which lay over a ridge exactly like Striden-edge on Helvellyn, in the north of England, from which we had a view of a precipice on each side of the most awful depth, and with very precarious footing, for here the guides could not make the usual notches, from the hardness of the rock."

resemble a set of projecting attic-windows, fixed in a steep shelving roof; but here, bristling with unequal splinters, they seemed to resemble a line of immense fir-apples, with the cones occasionally broken; but no words can give any adequate idea of the awful contrast of their dark isolated range of pinnacles with the dazzling fields of ice and snow above, around, and beneath them. The most capacious ledge is on the north-western side of the first rock of the range; of irregular width, being perhaps seven feet at the broadest, backed by the summit of the rock rising about twenty feet above it, and protected at its edge partly by natural projections of the rock itself, and partly by inserted stones which the guides place and renew on their expeditions. When I approached these rocks of refuge, the chief ledge was occupied by my son and three or four of our fellow aspirants; while the guides and porters were dispersed in smaller ledges or fissures of the range, so that the crags were all animated with mortal life; "a fortress built by nature for herself," not "against infection or the hand of war," but far beyond the reach of either, had been stormed and manned through all its rough battlements; while the piled poles gave hints of an armoury of lances, and the waving handkerchiefs of various colours which floated in the thin air, streamed like its festal flags. Almost in front rose the huge Dôme du Gouté—here surveyed in its full grandeur—a vast cupola of stainless snow; to its right, the Aiguille du Gouté, a bulk of rock rising out of a belt of snow; to the left, the highest summit, scarcely here looking larger than from the valley, but cast further back in a more solemn seclusion from its subject domes and spires; all beneath these, the greatest summits, was well-sunned but unspotted snow; broken only by a few reddish rocks on the right of the top; ascending on every side from the basin out of which our rock arose, and thence floating downwards till lost to the sight in the steepness of the descent, except that here and there at the rim of the downward view, a rock projected out,

as if overhanging the unseen abyss, in shape like the tusk of some gigantic animal. The lower snow was, however, illustrated by the track of the party—deep-imprinted steps of some twenty of "us fools of nature," which gave a human interest to the waste. Beyond, far below, almost as at the bottom of a well, the broadest part of the valley of Chamouni gleamed with its bits of yellow fields and white baby-houses, above which the top of the Bréven stood out in blackness; and, beyond that, the far mightier rock of the Aiguille Varens crouched like a lion in the deep blue sky. To the left, the huge round top of the Buet walled in the prospect; which was, although thus so mighty in objects, yet limited in extent; admitting no distance except a gleam of blue of the Lake of Geneva, with a faint outline of hills —the line of the Jura beyond it—which also I thought might be traced to the left of the Bréven at the extreme verge of the horizon. Having recovered sufficient strength to crawl round the buttress which towered above our resting-place, I looked down into the other great snow valley which it overlooked and divided from that which we had made ours; it was not so vast, but still more fearful: bordered by heights more abrupt, between the Aiguille du Midi and the summit, precipices which the chamois can never scale. Our rock on this side was far more precipitous than on that by which we had ascended; and, therefore, I contented myself with one glance, and crept back to my place in the safer eyry.

Our rock was now all over bustle with active and merry preparations for dinner. The guides, on all sides, were exhibiting the contents of their knapsacks; the porters brought out the more serious productions of their baskets; many a rough stone became the table on which a poor skinny fowl or a black leg of mutton lay ready for demolition; the sound of corks jerked musically on the air; and cups, glasses, and red wine, flowing around from bottle to glass, humanized the scene. Among the loose stones at the foot of the rock,

the guides had lighted a fire, from wood picked up by the way, and over it a saucepan was simmering right merrily with incipient lemonade, which they manufactured by first paving the ample saucepan with slices of lemons, then adding a layer of sugar, filling it up to the brim with snow, and boiling the whole together till it made the most innocent if not the pleasantest beverage which we enjoyed. The *vin ordinaire*, mingled with water, perhaps relieved or rather gratified the thirst still better; but we had excellent claret and sauterne, which were too dangerous drinks for us to take freely, but which we sipped in small quantities, and were still more pleased to offer to the guides, who always feel and appreciate a participation of that kind with their peculiar patient; and I am sure richly deserve it. The manner of dining belonged more to the romantic than the classical; there was no unity of place, though there was unity of purpose; each was supplied by his guide according to his wish with chicken and ham or mutton;—sometimes with a knife to himself, sometimes shared with his fellow; friendly regards were cemented by eating salt not merely at the same table but from the same paper; and when the guides found leisure to take their own well-earned meal, (not that some small blessings had been wholly wanting to them before) each was perched on his own crag, so that as you looked down the rough descent you might have fancied it a vast honeycomb alive with festive bees. Indeed the dinner never entirely ceased till it merged in supper; for there was a wild irregularity about our appetites congenial with the scene; and as for drinking—you had but to breathe a wish, and a stalwart cupbearer was at your side with a draught of lemonade, or wine-and-water such as Ganymede never handed to Jupiter in that lower region which was the scene of his Olympian revels. I regret to confess that I could not eat much myself; but I looked with a pleasure akin to that with which the French King watched the breakfast of Quentin Durward, on the activity of my younger friends, as they tore

asunder the devoted chickens; poor fleshless things! unworthy of so elevated a destiny; but whose bones, prematurely exalted into fossils, will supply important matter of speculation to aspiring geologists, and be produced to wondering Scientific Associations in future ages.

When the first rage of hunger was appeased—but before the tables were eaten or removed (which will not be for some time)—the guides suggested the expediency of arranging our dresses at once for the night and for the ascent, by putting on the warm clothing suitable to both, and which being once done, would enable us to start as soon as we should be awakened for the upward march. A smooth ledge in the next rock served us in turn for a dressing-room, in which my huge stockings were, by some magic, drawn on; and the massive shoes, which had been dried in the sun, resumed; and gaiters buttoned over the trousers in strange fashion—in all which very arduous accomplishments I was assisted by Julien, with a delicate dexterity which would have done honour to a French valet, and a mingled kindness, respect and command, like those blended in the manner of an old family servant to a petted young master. I should have thought the shoes, well saturated with snow, once removed, could never have been put on over the tremendous stockings; but even this last miracle of the toilet was happily accomplished; and I was pronounced ready to lie down for the night and to start on the morrow, or rather at the mid-night summons. So, after a cup of weak brandy-and-water which Julien recommended and shared, I took my pole and picked my way over the prostrate bodies of two young gentlemen who were already asleep, and squeezed myself into my allotted niche, with my head supported by a large comfortable stone, and my feet pressed against the low fence edging the shelf—figuring myself to myself as like an effigy on a monument. The position was in no respect, however, unpleasant, except in the confinement of the limbs and a very slight feeling of cold; and I was surprised to find how very tolerable a couch

it proved. The notion of the ledge being a terrible place—overhanging or bordering a frightful precipice, is entirely erroneous; its height above the snow on the side it fronts is not formidable; and the bristling irregularity of the rock prevents the slightest sense of dizziness or danger. It is far beyond all reach of avalanches—which are heard in the stillness of the night thundering down the surrounding but distant precipices, with no more possibility of reaching the listener, than when he looks on the Jungfrau from the platform of the Wengern Alp. It has been customary, according to the published narratives of the ascent, to erect a tent here, under which the travellers sleep; and Mr. Bosworth, early in the afternoon, put up an awning against the rock and supported it by poles, under which he proposed to sleep and to include us;—which seemed to justify me in applying to our position the words of the fated Richard—

> "Here pitch our tent; even here in Bosworth field—
> Up with my tent; here will I lie to-night;
> But where to-morrow?—Well, all 's one for that;
> Up with the tent!"

But the experiment did not answer; the tent was laid aside, having served no purpose but associating a passage of Shakspeare with our lot; enough in itself to humanise the desolate snows; and its owner, with that quiet kindness which marked his demeanour, finding that one of the younger gentlemen needed the accommodation of the best ledge more than himself, silently resigned it, without the theatrical expression of Sir Philip Sidney, and bivouacked on the second rock. We lay, therefore, with no meaner covering than the heavens, on the ledge—my son occupying the outer place, "at his particular desire, and, for that night only"—and I resting beside him. He did not, however, come to bed till long after I had taken up my station; but was scrambling about the rocks and breaking chicken bones with the guides, who kept up the festivity of the evening till after sunset.

Soon after I had thus "set up my rest," the grand process of sun-setting began; and solemn as have been many sunsets to me, I never saw one—I will not say merely equal to this—but one resembling it; for the difference was not in degree, but in kind. Above and around there was not a cloud—not a speck to dim the deepening azure of the sky, nor a fleecy breath of mist wafted or lingering about the towers or domes of the mountain. These glowed for a few minutes in deeper rose-colour than that which appeared to clothe them at this hour from below; the summit, as usual, retained it last; and when it faded, it left them in the cold whiteness of the dawn. Thus far—with the grandeur above us—all passed in its usual procession of glory; but while I watched those receding tints, flocks of clouds arose below; and filled up the valley of Chamouni to the brim with tissues waving greyly, like floating shrouds. They were then seen creeping up within the folds of the valley beyond, till that also assumed, as far as it was revealed, the same spectral veil—while the top of the Bréven, the Aiguille Varens, and the head of the Buet, stood out like islands in that solemn sea. But beyond—in the expanse to the right of the Bréven top, what glory was disclosed!—a heaven-tinged cloud-land, not to be gazed at from below by a subject-mortal, but to be looked down into as from a purer seat—a subjected enchantment spread beneath us—as if, from some pinnacle of heaven, the eye were permitted to gaze upon its lower glories, the habitations and the array of angels. The first appearance of this vision was that of a celestial city, all of sapphire, circling a lake of azure, while far away in measureless distance, legions of angelic hosts—shapeless as those of Rembrandt, descending on Jacob's slumber, but giving like them the sense of winged glories, were ranged, while tents and pavilions of violet and gold, behind them, seemed to bespeak a martial array. Presently these splendours became all confused; and then a sterner grandeur reigned; a scene of huge purple caverns and

golden rocks, but beside a sapphire sea studded with islands of deeper gold; and then the colours blended, and faded, and nothing but one heap of purple clouds filled the place of the gorgeous vision; and I was alone with the rock, the snow, and the stars.

When this pageantry of a lower heaven had quite passed away, I fell asleep, and slept without a dream. I only awoke once, and finding my next companion awake, inquired if he knew the hour, hoping that the period for starting had arrived. He informed me, being able to interpret the language of his watch, that it was only ten o'clock; but, after a minute or two's shiver I fell asleep again, and slept till the guides roused me at ten minutes before twelve from deep and sweet slumber. There was no moonlight—the only elemental felicity wanting to our enterprise—but the stars and the snow relieved the darkness, which was also broken by numerous lanterns, which were already lighted, and shone among the bristling cornices of the rock below me like huge dull glow-worms. After the first sensation of cold and stiffness had subsided, and the mistiness that hangs over the perception of a suddenly-awakened sleeper in a strange place had dispersed, I took my pole and picked my way down the rock, my steps being lighted by Julien's lantern, and soon found myself in the midst of the long procession of travellers and guides, slowly pacing the plain of snow which lies between the rock and the first upward slope. When we began to ascend, the snow was found so hard and so steep, that we were obliged to pause every ten paces while the guides with hatchets cut steps. Every one, I believe, performs some part well; at least few are without some grace or power, which they are found to possess in a peculiar degree if the proper occasion occurs to rouse it into action; and I performed the stopping part admirably. While we stood still I felt as if able to go on; and it is possible that if the progress had always been as difficult, and consequently as slow and as replete with stoppages, I

might eventually have reached the summit—unless first frozen. But unluckily for me these occasions of halting soon ceased; for the snow become so loose, that by only sinking to the knees in it at each step you could advance without an obstacle. The line of march lay up long slopes of snow; nothing could ever be discerned but a waste of snow ascending in a steep inclination before us; no crevice gave us pause; there was nothing to vary the toil or the pain, except that as fatigue crept on, and nature began to discriminate between the stronger and the weaker, our line was no longer continuous but broken into parties, which, of course, rendered the position of the hindermost more dispiriting. The rarity of the atmosphere now began to affect us; and as the disorder resulting from this cause was more impartial than the distribution of muscular activity, our condition was, for a short time, almost equalised; even Mr. Bosworth felt violent nausea and headache; while I only felt, in addition to the distress of increasing weakness, the taste or scent of blood in the mouth, as it were about to burst from the nostrils. We thus reached the Grand Plateau —a long field of snow in the bosom of the highest pinnacles of the mountain—which, being nearly level, was much less distressing to traverse than the previous slopes; but just before the commencement of the next ascent, which rose in a vast dim curve, the immediate occasion of my failure occurred. Mr. Bosworth, who was in advance, turned back to inform me that my son was so much affected by the elevation, that his guides thought it necessary that he should return. We halted till we were joined by him and his guides; on two of whom he was leaning, and who explained that he was sick and faint, and wished to lie down for a few minutes, to which they would not consent, as, if he should fall asleep on the snow, he might never awake. The youth himself was anxious to proceed—quite satisfied, if he might only rest for a very little time, he could go on—but they shook their heads, and as their interests

and wishes were strongly for our success, I felt it was impossible to trifle with such a decision. I could not allow him to return without me ; and, therefore, determined at once to abandon the further prosecution of the adventure ; a determination which I should not else have formed *at that moment*, but which I believe I must have adopted soon from mere prostration of strength ; and which, therefore, I do not lay, in the least, to the charge of his indisposition. He was still light of limb and courageous in heart ; only afflicted by the treachery of the stomach, and dizziness produced by the rarity of the air ; whereas, if I had been supported and dragged (as perhaps I might have been) to the foot of the steep at La Côte, which is the last difficulty of the ascent, I do not believe I should have had muscular pliancy left to raise a foot up a step of the long staircase, which the guides are obliged to cut in its frozen snow. While the guides were re-arranging matters for the descent, I took one longing lingering glance at the upward scenery, and perceived sublime indications of those heights I was never to climb. The other parties were ascending the enormous curve beyond our platform ; their line exhibited only by the lanterns, which seemed self-moving along the snow amidst darkness, but marking luminously a portion of the glorious dome—regular, it seemed, as that of St. Paul's Cathedral—and more beautiful, because springing at once into a globular form, and of a size compared to which all cupolas fashioned by hands are as those of a baby-house—recalling to my mind the sphere throne of the Spirit in the Hall of Eblis.

Silent and sad our discomfited bands addressed themselves to the inglorious work of descending ; and each of us being supported by a rope which was held by a guide, moved downwards (alas !) with accelerated steps. Morning soon broke cold and grey over us, and became broad day when we regained our former lodging on the Grands Mulets. Here we found clothing and provisions which we had left, without any apprehension of theft ; and, with the aid of the

guides, who wrapped the coverings about us with great adroitness, renewed our couch, and tried in vain to sleep. We had scarcely endeavoured to compose ourselves before we saw another detachment—that of one of the young gentlemen who had joined us from the Hôtel de Londres—following our downward track, and soon welcomed him as a companion in misfortune. And presently a black lonely speck was discovered, slowly moving on the snow, downward yet far out of our track; who or what it could be was matter of puzzling guesses, almost of fear; but it turned out to be an enthusiastic old man, who, many years ago, had been one of the Chamouni guides, but had been living since some other life at Geneva, and being disturbed by reports of the favourable condition of his once-loved mountain, and of the ascents which had succeeded, travelled to the Prieuré to join or follow some party, and had modestly followed ours alone at a distance, in the hope of once more realising the summit of his young ambition and success. He found that he had overtasked his strength; and soon reached us, piteously exhausted, to obtain some relief in the consolations of his old comrades, and in a participation in such fragmental provisions as were left from the evening's banquet.

Although jaded, and without "that alacrity and cheer of spirit," which mounting had induced, I felt no inclination to sleep; and watched the sun's advance over the sea of clouds which filled the valleys; but the effects were so inferior to those which attended the setting, that I can scarcely recal them to memory.

We remained on the rock till seven o'clock, about the time when Mr. Bosworth and our other fortunate associate stood on the summit, having waited until the snow should be sufficiently softened to enable us to pass the glacier in safety. The guides having guessed that the slender bridge, by which we had crossed the principal crevice, existed no longer—in which conjecture the experience of those who

followed confirmed them—conducted us by a more circuitous route, which was not so absolutely secure from avalanches as that by which we ascended, but which presented no chasm too broad to be leaped over with very slight exertion. The descent of the stony defile was a long and painful labour, now unlightened by hope; and though the day was as glorious as its predecessors, I was now too eager to relieve the anxieties of our friends at Chamouni to observe the descending prospect. We found mules at a châlet below, near the place where the party had dismounted in ascending, and rode to our hotel. Although I was not disappointed in the result—for, on the contrary, its very failure had a success beyond all my reasonable anticipations, I shrunk from the gaze of the peasants, who stared at me as I passed—dropping curtsies and waving hands and handkerchiefs no longer—and thought, as I dismounted unobserved at the hotel (such vanities does the attempt nurture), of the feelings with which Napoleon must have shrunk into Paris from Waterloo. Our ladies, however, were perfectly satisfied with our inglorious safety, having suppressed much more fear than they had chosen to express, that they might not disappoint or distress us; and a warm bath, a change of dress, and some good tea, restored me to the height of agreeable languor and a pleasing sense of unsuccessful merit; so that when the petards fired off from the garden before our windows, announced the triumphant return of Mr. Bosworth, after the attainment of first-class honours, I was able, without (I believe) the least alloy of envy, to meet and congratulate him on success, merited no less by personal prowess than by regard to the comforts and feelings of others. A slight irritation of the skin was the only inconvenience which followed the attempt either of my son or myself; and that did not prevent us from dining at the *table d'hôte*, at five o'clock, and lounging idly by the river side in the evening.

Two questions will be asked by those who think the attempt worthy their consideration—was it justifiable?—and was it requited? I venture to answer both in the affirmative;—with the hope that I am right as to the first, and the certainty that I am right as to the last.

It is the fashion with those who have never felt the passion for ascending Mont Blanc to deal out heavy censures against those who have made the venture, as wantonly risking their own lives and tempting the guides to risk theirs, without any adequate purpose. Mr. Murray's Guide Book—which, without offence, I may consider as the virtual representative of all the respectable common-place on this subject—in one of those few passages which guide to nothing, and which, with the quotations from Lord Byron, may be regarded as taxes on the first necessary of travelling life—thus sums up the case against us. "When Saussure ascended to make experiments at that height, the motive was a worthy one, but those who are impelled by curiosity alone are not justified in risking the lives of the guides. The pay tempts those brave fellows to encounter the danger, but their safety, devoted as they are to their employers, is risked for a poor consideration. It is no excuse that the employer thinks his own life worthless; here he ought to think of the safety of others; and yet scarcely a season passes without the attempt." I cannot agree in the facts suggested in this passage, or in the inferences drawn from them. There is danger, to be sure—that is, the possibility of serious accident—as "'tis dangerous to ride, to walk, to take a cold," as there is more danger in sliding on the ice than on dry ground; or as it is dangerous to go into the water before you have learned to swim; but I do not believe there was more danger in our attempt than in penetrating the glaciers to the Jardin; the difficulty was the fatigue, not the danger. Doctor Hamel and his friends who persisted in ascending after a storm had shaken the snows and detained them for a whole day at the Grands

Mulets, might not be able to acquit themselves of blame when the fatal result occurred after all appearance of danger had passed; but I was assured by the *chef* and by all the guides, that there was no more danger than always attends walking on the ice among crevices, and to the guides, who are accustomed to such exercises, none whatever;—and I saw nothing to prove this judgment erroneous; indeed I never felt any danger except that of being obliged to turn back,—unless, indeed, when I was carried by my mule into the thicket on a path which no moralist, even if he had been director of an insurance company, would have forbidden to a life insured in his office. The rule seems to be sustained by an unjust exception in favour of scientific experiment—as if there were nothing else worthy encountering risk for! Surely the desire to penetrate into the profoundest recesses of the universe and expound their wonders to others—to acquire some knowledge of the greatness of its most marvellous objects beyond that expressed in mere figures of distances, in the hope to associate these with kindred thoughts, born of their majesties—is as worthy an object of risk—if risk there were—as to ascertain the density of the air at a given height. As to the hazard of the guides, which, except in expeditions undertaken against their judgment, is inconceivably small—I may ask whether every occupation must be stripped of all that elevates it and makes it heroic,—and whether any occupation can be truly heroic which has not in it something of danger? When Luckie Mucklebackit replies to our old friend Mr. Jonathan Oldbuck's expostulation on the dearness of her fish—"It is not fish you are buying, 'tis men's lives"—and is terribly justified by the catastrophe which follows—do we wish that fishermen should always keep their boats hauled on shore, except in weather when no storm is possible, lest some brave young fisher-lad should meet poor Steenie's fate? O, no!—life is a thing of hazards, or it is not life; but such stuff as "dreams are made of." Nor is

it just to the guides—venal as their professional courtesies and bravery, in one sense, are—to represent them as being tempted only by the pay to encounter the unavoidable labours and possible dangers of the ascent. They love the enterprise; not merely the sense and praise of success—but the actual intimacy they acquire with the mountain, which has cowered over their infancy; the glory of their native vale; and the daily wonder of their lives. I can bear witness that, at least in our case, there was no reluctance to overcome; for although I kept my purpose as secret as I could, I was pestered by applications from guides, who, having guessed it, wished engagements; and only escaped them by refusing to engage any, and referring them entirely to the *chef*. For myself, I can truly say that, in making the attempt—although it was foolish enough in reference to my chance of accomplishment—I was prompted by no idle wish for distinction; nor, if I had succeeded, should I have thought myself entitled to boast of any *feat* of physical prowess. On the contrary,—so great are the appliances supplied by the guides to a person who has not the strongest and justest self-reliance; so much is done for him—so little by him; he is so aided at every step; so supported, dragged, all but carried, that it seems to me a process more effeminate than manly, and by no means so unsuited to the nature of the ladies who have been among its achievers, than at first sight appears. With Mr. Bosworth and Mr. Nicholson, it was a real self-sustained effort; but, with me, even as far as I went, it implied little more than the capacity of moving and enduring. My motive was an earnest love of nature, heightened, in this instance, almost into passion, by the kindling perusal of many tales of the ascent; an ardent longing to unravel the mystery of a mountain, which I *believed* to be unrivalled in Europe, but which, to the eye, seemed surpassed in height by many nameless hills; and this I esteem as worthy a motive as the wish to make experiments with the barometer.

And was the effort, notwithstanding the failure of its loftiest aim, repaid? Yes;—richly. Except the panoramic view from the summit, which, even when unveiled, the successful adventurer has rarely the physical power to appreciate, I believe I obtained all the real fruits of the expedition; for I saw enough of the waving path above me to understand its majesties; and beyond my ken, there could be nothing greater. I know now what the mountain is; how it sits crouched, like Queen Constance, "on the huge firm earth," as if to hide its immensity from the superficial gazer. The object itself is so vast, so compressed to the eye between earth and heaven, partaking of both; so wonderful in the contrast between its ascertained immensity and its apparent lowness; that it is the acquisition of a great idea to understand at least enough of its foldings and recesses, to be able to image the rest. Viewed from Chamouni, the evening before I started, it was scarcely possible to believe it the monarch of European mountains;—it suggested associations rather of beauty than greatness; resembling a gigantic mosque, with its minarets and domes—such as might almost have been made with hands. With what different feelings did I gaze on it the evening after my descent, when the want of aerial perspective was supplied by pain-bought experience; when a faint, dark streak, bordering the glacier, denoted the enormous gulley; when the line of fretted white, on which the Grands Mulets seemed before to rest, expanded out into the mighty bosom of the rock-bound glacier, with its unfathomed crevices, and roar of hidden rivers, and all its border ice-caves of fantastical beauty; when the brown rock, presenting the aspect of a small penthoused window, rose before me, the fortress-lord of ten thousand acres of snow; when beyond, on the upward tract, "wilds immeasurably spread seemed lengthening;" and the small knot, which forms part of the figure called the "Dromedary's Back," rose the snow-dome of the star-lit solitude! It may be said that I *knew* before

that the mountain was more than 15,000 feet above the level of the sea; or, which is more to the purpose, 13,000 feet above the floor of Chamouni; but such knowledge was of no more worth, than the distance of a star from the earth, in which hundreds of millions of miles are just worth, to the imagination, the line of ciphers which represents them in the table. In explaining such an object, the reality expands the imagination; the details, instead of detracting from the general impression, infinitely heighten it—perhaps the best test of all physical greatness, which is built up of things individually grand, and not mere vague outline;—so that the idea of Mont Blanc is to me no longer a mere diagram, but a living verity. Then there was the evening at the Grands Mulets, crowned by an imperishable vision, and followed by the midnight aspect of the heavens, which here, surveyed from a spot above the impurities of the denser atmosphere, assumed a darker hue, and justified the Homeric description, "Ether all opens;" and though it is true that the same glory would have been vouchsafed if this rock had been the summit of my ambition, still it would not have been attended with the same interest, half-wild, half-solemn, which surrounded it as an incident in the greater adventure. Although, therefore, the attempt cost about a thousand francs, one day's scruples, and another day's misgivings; some slight sense of disappointment at the moment of return; and some hours' labour, amounting to suffering; I rejoice that it was made. The suffering was, no doubt, severe; but, as far as it can now be recollected, it aids in realising the tracks along which it was borne; while the earth-grandeur, the cloud visions, and even the physical reliefs and enjoyments of the way, will enrich the past, so long as it shall have power to cast sweetness on the present and the future.

The next day, our last in Chamouni, was one of delicious repose. A walk, slow, lingering, loitering, with frequent rests, to the source of the Arveron, was its only excursion;

but it was not only happy in itself but important to me, as completing my acquaintance with the homelier aspects of the valley. The day, like the long procession of its predecessors, was bright and warm, but light fleecy clouds were sailing about the loftiest pinnacles of the range of Mont Blanc—like the incense of the mountain hollows—just sufficient for the employment of a lazy eye—while the sky itself was unclouded. We took our way through the thin and scattered groves, intersected by clear streams often gushing across our path, and causing many a pretty perplexity and still prettier circuit in search of a passage; along the floor carpeted with soft grass, intermingled with softer mosses, and gemmed with deep-coloured flowers, while many a jutting root of an old tree offered a seat. Through the thin veil of the tree-tops or the openings of their glistering stems, the Aiguilles were seen towering into the sky, elevated in the thought to their proper heights by the capricious visitations of the faint clouds; and, as we advanced, the Mer de Glace waved above a hundred small threads of sunlit water that trickled from its subject masses of ice-bound earth. Butterflies of all colours, but chiefly yellow, glimmered in the lower air, which was fragrant with the odour of the fir-trees and the clumps of flowers. Following the valley to its last recess we reached a stony region—the wide seat of the Arveron—and winding our way beneath the bulging and discoloured ice on the right, and looking up to wooded acclivities on the left, we reached the huge dusky cavern which arches, with sullen grandeur, the flood of white water ever rushing from the foundations of the glacier that rises above it in sullen indifference to so slight a diminution of its mass. Even here, however, the minor details are beautiful; the right-hand path is bordered by vivid grass and plenteous flowers; and when the rocky earth relieves the ribs of ice, it waves with shrubs and birches and the scarlet berries of the mountain-ash.

In the evening, a satisfactory settlement with the guides and with our host; hearty farewells to the companions of the ascent; and one last gaze on the mountain top, lasting long after its pink hues had left it, closed a memorable week at Chamouni,—which we thought ourselves bound to leave at six in the morning.

CHAPTER IV.

RETURN FROM CHAMOUNI TO LONDON.

View from the Col de Balme—Martigny revisited—News of our unfelt disasters—Journey from Martigny to Vevay—Journey from Vevay to Thun by the Simmenthal—Saanen—Journey from Thun to Lucerne through the Emmenthal—Lucerne—Mont Pilatus—Journey from Lucerne by Zug to Zurich—Representation of Rossini's "Otello" at Zurich—Reasons why the opera is more agreeable than the dramatic Othello—Journey from Zurich to Basle—Grand distant View of the Alps—Rapid Journey by Railway and steamboat to Cologne—Journey from Cologne to Brussels—Waterloo visited—Journey to Ostend and voyage to London—Concluding remarks on the sources of our enjoyment of scenery, and comparison between the scenery of Switzerland and that of Britain.

As, on our former visit, we left Chamouni by the Tête Noire, we chose now the *route* over the Col de Balme ; and found, in the single view from the top, ample compensation for the glades and glooms of the romantic pass beneath us, though, when we reached the point where the roads diverge, I cast a longing look on the lovely pathway we had before trodden. Ascending thence by the side of the Arve, diminishing to its highest fountain, and here a pure rock-imbedded stream, we reached the bleak common which surmounts the Col de Balme, a round wild summit-plain between far loftier hills. The view on both sides from this spot is remarkable for embracing objects greater and with a more limited compass than perhaps any other in the Alps ; the chief, of course, being Mont Blanc, which here is seen on the side as well as front, and from a position so elevated as to enable the spectator to grasp a worthier notion of the huge masses of its higher snow than from the floor of Chamouni. The top here indicates the supremacy of its throne without the aid of its evening tinge of pink, being seen far above the line of Aiguilles and glaciers, and

overlooking the Dôme du Gouté, which alone approaches it in height. From the elevation of the point of view, the roots of the mountain which chequer its lower aspect in Chamouni interposing between the streams of ice which the Glaciers pour into the depth of the valley, patches of dark pine grove, are here scarcely perceived; so that the mountain looks one glistening mass of ice, wreathed into ample and graceful folds, unbroken except by the small intrusions of brown rock, which in two or three points start into view; and is presented in the most dazzling contrast to the stern mountain ridge opposite, which ascends in a jagged line from the *Rochers Rouges* close beneath the eye to the summit of the Bréven—all being entirely snowless. Between the two, the valley lies, so diminished by their heights, that though seen here at its full length, and just below the eye, it looks more like a deep pit than a broad populous valley, its rivers diminished to white threads, and its three churches to the miniatures of a model. Turning round towards Trient, you look across the narrow valley, here wholly concealed, within a basin of dark brown hills, of bold and simple forms; while the prospect to the right and left is shut in by neighbouring ledges of rock, over which the Buet towers. Thus everything, within the sphere of vision, has a noble simplicity; while the mossy earth on which you stand, pierced by rocks and peopled by one rocky stream and one small, strong-built cottage, allows the intrusion of no sentiment inconsistent with the sense of solitude and power. In the welcome shelter of the châlet, we peeped into two snug bed-rooms supplied with low beds, making us almost long to hear the winds raging through a winter's night, and enjoyed a breakfast consisting of a well-boiled knuckle of mutton; excellent bread and butter; and a bowl of cream; to which we added before starting a bottle of red wine, the colour of mulberry juice, and of a very palatable roughness.

The descent hence into the valley of Trient was to me

inexpressibly tiresome; all descents indeed are, appearing much longer than the corresponding ascent, from the absence of any demand for action; and here uncheered by any prospect, except where, towards its close, the white mass of the glacier of Trient, looking as if it were painfully compressed within the jaws of the narrow glen, gleamed through the trees. Our guides, however, gave an interest to one spot, by telling how a French traveller, two summers ago, had slipped thence, in his attempt to find a nearer way to the bottom; and having been missed by his companions, who had walked on before him from the châlet, was traced by the napoleons which had fallen from his waistcoat pocket in his fatal descent, and leading on from crag to crag on which they lay, conducted the party seeking him to his mangled remains. The more gradual ascent of the Forclaz, on the opposite side of the glen, was a relief to us, the eye frequently reposing on the rich meadows which stretch out to the first abrupt turn of the valley, and the path bordered by shrub-like thickets, until it joined that which we traversed two years ago from the Tête Noire. The long descent to Martigny did not seem to me so tedious as I then felt it—perhaps because, although a much longer descent than that from the Col de Balme, it was so strikingly dissimilar to it,—the former being a steep spiral path, almost like a cork-screw staircase; and the latter a long regular slant—the former being shut in by hills, and the latter open in front to an enormous level valley—that the variety was curious. Martigny seemed to me also a tinge more cheerful—I felt a certain bounteousness of vegetation about it approaching to Italian, which imparted a sense of luxury to a quiet evening stroll among its orchard-bound lanes. Here we had the pleasure of learning that my son and myself had encountered more disasters than we were aware of in our attempt to ascend Mont Blanc, for the benefit of the gossips of Geneva, where a circumstantial narrative of our having lost our way on

the mountain, of one of us being found dashed to pieces at the foot of a rock, and the other brought down so nearly exhausted as to be past all hope, had been largely circulated,—although, as in the case of Sir Peter Teazle and Mr. Surface, there was a difference as to the distribution of the calamities—which of the two was dead and which dying. A gentleman, whose name I did not learn, but who knew me by sight, and who had heard the story the day before at the Bergues hotel, started when we met in one of the long galleries of La Poste, and congratulated me cordially on being still among the living, and on being assured by me that my son was in the *salle-à-manger*, suffering under no complaint except that of hunger. A friend of ours was shocked by the same authentic narrative, in a French *diligence;* and I scarcely know how it escaped the English newspapers, where, arriving at the deadest season of the year, it might have agreeably relieved the vacancy of intelligence; still less can I account for its invention, as, whatever we might have deserved, we had escaped without a scratch or an hour's illness.

Having ascertained that we had not time, within the utmost extent of the Eton holidays, to cross the Simplon, we determined to proceed by Vevay through the Simmenthal to Thun, thence to visit Lucerne, and find our way thence to Strasburg, there to renew our pledged allegiance to the Steam Company of Cologne. Being now on the great road, we posted from Martigny to Vevay—a delightful morning's journey—passing the great waterfall of the Sallenche; the old town and mountain-engulfed bridge of St. Maurice, which Rogers has vividly described in a few words—"where a key unlocks a kingdom"—through a cheerful succession of meadows, beyond which the Lake of Geneva opens a limitless expanse of blue, like an ocean bay—through the long old-fashioned lake-side town of Villeneuve, which, with its low walls mouldering on Roman foundations, and dingy alleys disclosing the deep blue

water, is worthy to be described by Dickens—beneath the Hotel Byron, which needs no description, and beside the Castle of Chillon, which I have tried to describe—and so arrived in time for the splendid *table d'hôte* of the Three Crowns. The waterfall, like the Staubach and the Nant d'Arpenaz, springs from its channel into air, but not, like them, dashed into spray, falls in an unbroken column of 120 feet in height, to the channel by which it passes across the highway to the Rhône. As its body of water, which is large, gushes from a precipice near the side of the road, and presents its entire force to the traveller, without any accessory either to break its effect or to divide the interest by beauty, it surprises more than any fall of a mountain torrent by which I remember to have been startled. But far more deeply impressive is a little quiet scene within the sound of its roar—the stream from the Tête Noire gliding from a chasm in the mountain just wide enough for its passage—only discernible a few yards on its awful way, but winding so black and still from its grey recesses of rock, that it seems worthy to be caverned among Nature's most solemn mysteries. The evening at Vevay was of the most splendid serenity;—the rich sunlights giving place to the paler influences of the moon upon the water; so that when the small boats were discerned quivering among the soft lights or starting across them, and the visitors of the hotel paced its garden terrace in social groups, or lingered to listen to the instruments and the voices of gallant and fair amateurs of music in the saloon, I could not help acknowledging to myself that, however little Lord Byron's home of love might vindicate its divinity in the broad day-light, this scene might possibly elicit some tender confessions which had eluded all the balls of the last London season.

At Vevay we found a *voiturier* from Thun, who offered himself to convey us thither, and whom we liked so well, that we engaged him thence for all our Swiss journeyings, till we parted at Basle. He was young and good-tempered

—spoke a little English and a good deal of French—wore no moustachios or beard, saying, "I do not cut up my face like a garden"—a just view of the subject; for one can understand an entire relinquishment of the care of such matters to nature, but not such a fantastic intermeddling with her growth, as perpetually invites attention to features and expressions which nature never made for admiration. Under his auspices, we retraced our road to Bulle; dined there at a coarse but plentiful *table d'hôte* at mid-day, and gazed again at the finely-proportioned swellings of its valley; and then spent a lovely afternoon, prolonged into the darkness, in the ride to Château d'Œx, where, in a good *auld-world* inn, we found a plentiful supper. The road, half encircling the fortress of Gruyères, a huge old castle, which is now devoted to the warehousing of the cheeses that maintain the reputation of its name,—and then diving deep into green recesses beside a clear broad stream, had the pastoral and sequestered air of a cross-country lane in the midst of England, only bordered by richer loveliness, and so narrow for miles, that we could only hope that no carriage would meet us—for to pass one seemed impossible. We started at daybreak for Thun, and stopped to breakfast at Saanen, the ancient capital of the valley of the Upper Sarine, one of the most primitive places in Switzerland; suggesting to us what an English market town, in the midst of an agricultural district, was five hundred years ago, "with a difference," no doubt, in the materials and forms of the houses, but still breathing of the same imperfect civilisation, simple manners, and homely kindness. The chief street, narrow, paved with small stones, with a gutter in the centre,—the irregular lines of houses, though of wood, yet so old; so charred by the sun and beaten by the storm; so hardened by the seasoning of centuries; that you could only by examination discern their material; some shrinking back from the frontage, some approached by wide pent-housed porches,—all with pointed roofs of different heights and varied inclina-

tions,—all, even the humblest, embossed with carved-work ; the shops twinkling with small square windows, in which the wares were scantily exhibited, as if to repel extravagance, and invite those only who had urgent need of the commodities, except two or three suburban stalls (the pride, no doubt, of the town), where, displayed with blameless ostentation, huge clouted shoes, ponderous velveteen breeches, and other massive pieces of male attire, were relieved by the gentler forms of caps and bunches of cherry-coloured ribbon, and flanked by a handful of umbrellas of red and yellow and bright blue —all spoke the secluded mart of a people whose wants are few and whose vanities rarer. The hotel called the *Landhaus*, which was also used as the council-house, where we rested, was quite in keeping with these external peculiarities. The entrance to it from the street was by a wide wooden staircase, filling the passages, like the steps to one of our granaries, which led to a large casemented room on the first floor, curiously carved, divided by long tables of dark wood, on which scattered drinking-cups gave hints of the last evening's revel. Across this room we were conducted to a smaller chamber, where the furniture was of the same ancient fashion ; and soon heartily enjoyed a breakfast, served on plain white plates, consisting of tolerable bread, excellent butter, fresh eggs, thick cream, cheese, and cold boiled mutton, very nicely flavoured, and very well boiled ; and the charge was consistent with the good old times of which every thing else savoured. The landlord, a tall gaunt figure, with a certain air of simple dignity, observing that I took an interest in the house, showed me over it, and I found it all in keeping. He remarked that the principal room on the first floor, in which "a solemn supper" had been holden the night before, was the hall in which the councillors (of whom he was one) held their meetings ; pointed out the Landamman's old chair, a high-backed piece of venerable carved work, which he said existed beyond all record ; and in the kitchen, an enormous room, now half filled with cheeses and

sides of bacon, expatiated with honest pride on a fire-place at which an ox might have been roasted, and a huge chimney opening direct on the sky, black with the soot of many generations. We left the good old house, which its owner informed us had stood for more than five hundred years, with a wish that it might stand to shelter as unsophisticated manners and as kind hearts, for five hundred years to come.

We soon crossed a little stream, over which a ruined castle held its state, from the Canton of Vaud into the Canton of Berne ; and saw everywhere around us the indications of wealth, cleanliness and plenty, which make the Simmenthal the pride of Switzerland ;—large wooden houses, often curiously carved, and almost always hallowed by texts of Scripture in old letters on the front, and sometimes dignified by a date, indicating a great age for the edifice, and proving how dearly the sense of antiquity is cherished even under the simplest laws, and by men initiated only in the most practical lessons of rural life ; great wealth of flocks and herds, and groups of plump blue-eyed merry children. At one place, where we stopped beneath an enormous tree to refresh the horses, the innkeeper added to his character of host, that of chief baker of the neighbourhood ; and the scale on which the operations were proceeding, the heaps of loaves and yards of long bread, denoted an excellent trade and good appetites in the customers. The country, however, was not so beautiful as that through which we passed on the preceding evening, except in one spot, where the river Simmen, which accompanied and occasionally intersected our way, almost encircled a mass of rock, fringed and crowned by noble trees, until we reached Weissenbourg, where we dined at a pleasant hotel shut in by the mountains. From hence the scene expanded—the river grew larger approaching its mouth—and between the two great portals of the Simmenthal, the Stockhorn, and the Neisen, we passed to the banks of the Lake of Thun ; but the twilight, which had been prematurely deepened by a storm, enabled us to discern

little beyond the noble proportions of the objects around us. It was quite dark long before we reached Thun; and reposed at one of the embowered hotels within one garden, which seem more like the summer pavilions of a luxurious monarch than the branches of an establishment for the entertainment of travellers.

On the following day, we left Thun—not without casting a longing look down its lake towards Interlachen, less affluent in the artificial appliances of beauty, but more within the circle of great objects—and, under the light government of our pleasant coachman, proceeded on our way to Lucerne. The journey was divided into two days,—our resting place being a clean rustic inn, the Bear, which was sweetened by large myrtles fringing its windows, lying close to the small village of Signau, below the ruins of a castle. The way had little that stands out in the memory, lying chiefly through a scene of rich valleys—which would have enchanted Jeanie Deans; for while their pastures of the richest green, sustaining unnumbered herds and flocks, would excite her admiration for "a braw cattle-feeding country," the rocks above them would satisfy the utmost longing for natural grandeur which Salisbury Crags could nurture. Expecting from the position of Lucerne to descry it from a distance, I was startled when, at a sharp turn of the road, its grey walls, surmounted by massive towers, rose almost close to us, presenting a beautiful contrast to the unbounded luxuries of the swelling fields and orchards around it. The interior of the city scarcely realises this promise; the streets are irregular and narrow, without being reconciled to the mind by the vestiges of age; the shops dark, yet with civic pretence; and a feeling of dirt and closeness pervaded the whole; while pirated works of English authors evinced the commercial principle of the free traders; and frequent display of small prints of small picturesque points of Swiss scenery, showed that we had changed a people unconsciously enjoying their country, for

citizens reckoning up its charms for sale. There is, however, the relief of the broad blue stream of the Lower Reuss, just issued from the lake, rushing among the thick-set houses; the long bridges, with their open pictures of the lake and meadows, and their covered quaint pictures of Scripture and Swiss history; and, far above all, there is the Lion, saddening and sweetening the thoughts of all who come within the circle of its charm.

We remained for a day at Lucerne,—not very satisfactorily employed because without any definite purpose—chiefly illustrated by a long morning visit to the Lion, and an evening walk up a long hill, on the top of which we obtained a noble view of Mount Pilatus. There is something awfully grand in every aspect of this pile of rock, which makes it a fit abode for the restless spirit of the Roman whom conscious corruption and guilty weakness involved in a crime far beyond "the reach of his soul," and invested his name with a terrible importance, of which he little dreamed when he yielded to the suggestions of his craven nature. When bathed in sunshine, the broken architecture of its top, the rocks which rise around it like unfinished columns, and the blocks which seem slanted among them, complete the idea of the Tower of Babel suddenly stopped in its progress; but when its summit is partially seen breaking through dark clouds, it suggests more fearful images of splintering thunder and sacrificial ruin. No snow-wreath lightens the impression, or detracts from the sense of earth-born power, either stagnant in mid-air by divine prohibition, or stricken by divine vengeance.

Early in the next morning, we left Lucerne for Zurich, resting at the small town of Zug, where we spent two delicious hours on the margin of its lovely lake, spreading out its azure beneath the dark banks of the Righi, over the shoulder of which the grander Pilatus still frowned into the landscape. We arrived in time to dine at the Hotel "Baur," and to learn that there would be a special performance

at the theatre of Rossini's opera of "Otello," with Madame Schroeder-Devrient for the heroine. In addition to that longing after dramatic representations which one feels at a distance from London, the remembrance of this lady when she performed *Fidelio* some years ago—her bold, simple, impressive style of acting, akin to the ordinary passages of Pasta's, induced me to propose that we should sacrifice a precious hour of twilight to witness the performance; and, to me at least, the sacrifice was repaid. The part of *Desdemona* was, indeed, unsuited to her age and figure, and I should think not well suited to her voice; but there was an earnestness and directness in her acting—a conception of a tragic situation and feeling, which, appealing to higher sympathies than those excited by personal loveliness and grace, found their answer. It is always pleasant to witness a struggle in an artist who must affect us through the medium of physical qualifications, against the ravages of time, and that injustice which the theatrical public, at least in England, commit when they condemn actresses as too old for characters which youth, except by some rare felicity, could never find wisdom to appreciate, or depth of passion to vivify, or skill to realise. Madame Devrient's exertions were deemed so successful by the manager, that a sort of ovation followed the opera; the curtain rose and exhibited half a dozen youths in black, shouldering huge flambeaux, while the heroine came forward and was crowned with laurel by the hands of the lady who manages the theatre, and who is herself an authoress of many dramas of at least temporary attraction. In other respects the opera was well performed, by the actor who played *Otello* as fairly as the part allowed; and though it is despoiled both of the fury and the tenderness of its dramatic prototype, it affords considerable opportunities for energetic action. The story of Othello, softened by musical expression, deprived at once of the prodigious intellectual power developed in

Shakspeare's tragedy, and of the familiar pathos and horror with which that power is blended, is to me, I own, rendered more agreeable for the purpose of scenic exhibition by the adapting process.

It is, indeed, true that the dialogue of the tragedy, which is lost in the opera, is adapted to the domestic nature of its subject, and to the varied characters of its strongly contrasted persons, with a curious felicity scarcely equalled elsewhere even by its author. As the diction of Romeo and Juliet has its own honied sweetness in the breathings of young and sudden love, and its own mournful beauty in the movements of despair and anticipated death ; as that of Coriolanus bounds with a triumphant freedom, echoing the proud sincerity and generous scorn of the single-hearted soldier ; as that of Hamlet floats in river-like meanderings through the waverings of purpose and the mazes of thought ; as that of Macbeth thickens like the light of the evening of Banquo's murder, and becomes stiffened and embossed with the imagery of regal guilt,—so that of Othello is quick, vivid, glancing ; combining the ease of conversation with the charm of melody ; and rising and sinking with the movements of the heart which it interprets. But can it be denied that, even as pruned by modern delicacy, it is disfigured, not only by coarse words, but by allusions and images, which if now heard for the first time would not be endured by those whose duty it is to protect the ears of the "fair and innocent" from offence, and their hearts from pollution ; passages so offensive when deliberately examined, that one can scarcely help suspecting that in the instance of a play, which has been represented so often, and given scope to so much transcendent acting, audiences have reversed the usual process, and instead of looking beyond the actor's gesticulations and tones to the author's meaning, have forgotten the meaning in the symbol, and, accustomed to witness the energetic expression of one performer after another in the

utterance of certain words, have almost ceased to regard the import of the words themselves ?* Can it be denied that the action of the play discloses a series of insults and injuries to innocent womanhood, of which the last is not the worst ? And though these may be compensated to the reader, who may be able to reject or disbelieve them, by the mighty alternations of passion in the Moor, *through* whom rather than *by* whom they are inflicted, does their scenic exhibition admit of such compromise ? Take, for example, the scene in the fourth act, in which Othello, having ordered Emilia to bring Desdemona to him, pours out his fury on her innocent head—is the shocking fantasy which dictates the arrangements of that scene, from the first dismissal of Emilia to the casting down of the purse at her feet—rendered less real by embracing a speech as exquisite in its pathos, as ever seemed to tremble with the vibrations of a breaking heart ! Whether beyond the ebb and flow of Othello's passion, as his strange credulity yields to the falsehoods of which he is the dupe, or his returning love rejects them ; not the workings of jealousy which "makes the meat it feeds on" out of innocent trifles, but the oscillation of belief in reiterated inventions ; there is any great tragic purpose worked out through the sufferings of the two victims of Iago's malice or cupidity, or revenge, or sport ; whether the absence of a real cause for the rage and agony, which are so exquisitely diversified by the self-references of

* With the feeling which I have expressed respecting the public utterance of these passages, it is impossible to quote the instances at length. But I may refer to the lines which precede Othello's noble farewell to the "pride, pomp, and circumstance of glorious war ;" the image of "flies in shambles," and the speech in which it occurs ; the description given by Iago of Cassio's pretended words in sleep ; the directions of Othello to Emilia both before and after his fearful interview with Desdemona in the fourth act ; and Othello's own repetition to Desdemona on her death-bed, of Cassio's alleged confession ; as containing expressions which no actor ought to be compelled or incited to utter before a mixed audience, however they may be excused in the author, by reference to the manners of the age in which he wrote, or redeemed (as they are ten thousand fold) by the genius which has vivified with a diviner life the worlds without us and within us.

the chief sufferer to those personal disqualifications of colour and age which, beyond hope, had seemed overcome by the confidence of a generous and loving heart, any passion or motive has been attributed to the prompter of all this wretchedness and guilt, which in nature or true art can balance the picture, and make his villanous triumph endurable,—are questions which the performance of the great drama suggests to those whose idolatry of genius is not wholly blind, but which are independent of the principal objections to its stage representation.* Yielding to none in

* Mr. Hazlitt, the most subtle and discriminating of all Shakspeare's English adorers, thus sums up his apology for the character of Iago, in his criticism on Mr. Kean's performance of the part :—

"The general ground-work of the character of Iago is not absolute malignity, but a want of moral principle, or an indifference to the real consequences of the actions, which the meddling perversity of his disposition and love of immediate excitement lead him to commit. He is an amateur of tragedy in real life; and instead of exercising his ingenuity on imaginary characters, or forgotten incidents, he takes the bold and more desperate course of getting up his plot at home, casts the principal parts among his nearest friends and connections, and rehearses it in downright earnest, with steady nerves and unabated resolution. The character is a complete abstraction of the intellectual from the moral being; or, in other words, consists in an absorption of every common feeling in the virulence of his understanding, the deliberate wilfulness of his purposes, and in his restless, untameable love of mischievous contrivance."

This ingenious theory suggests more refined springs of action than those which appear on the surface; than the suspicion of a domestic wrong which is just hinted at and then thrown aside; than the hatred of "a daily beauty" in Cassio's life; or the love of Roderigo's jewels. That there is in Iago a great vivacity of perverted intellect—not in the inventions which are mere falsehoods, aided by the theft of a handkerchief, and an artifice which casts Othello into a swoon in a scene which is not acted—but in his dazzling fence with envenomed words—is true; but that Shakspeare intended Iago's character to be the impersonation of intellectual power, directed for its mere gratification to crime, I cannot believe. If this view of the character were just, it would be lamentable, as it would present a signal instance of the deliberate abuse of the richest gifts with which a human mind has been endowed by its Creator. For though, in the waywardness of our nature, a love of action and a sense of power may sometimes prompt to cruel deeds, no being, in the mould of humanity, was ever impelled by such motives to devise, in cold blood, such schemes of wretchedness as Iago plans, and to execute them by means so base as those which he employs. Would then a man gifted beyond his fellows of all ages with the power of multiplying creations of individualised character, and breathing into them the breath of a deathless life, rightly employ this faculty in shaping an impersonation of low but vivid intellectual power, exerted only from the love of its exercise; in reconciling the spirit of such a fiend to

admiration of its familiar and terrible beauties, I own that their total loss in the musical adaptation of the story, was more than compensated by the absence of the allusions and images with which they are too closely interwoven to be severed ; and which I have never felt or lamented so much as when I have endeavoured to reconcile conscientious objections to the enjoyment, in the acted drama, of the most delightful of all intellectual recreations.

On the morning after the triumph of Madame Schrœder-Devrient, which was doubtless made sweeter by being rendered in the scene of her youthful successes, we left Zurich, notwithstanding the temptation to remain one day at the least, and visit all its wonders, its hospital, its public school, its library, its manufactories, its town-hall, which a gentleman, whom we accidentally met at the Hôtel Baur, held out to us, and whose pleasant enthusiasm on behalf of his adopted city rivalled that of some of the most distinguished inhabitants of that famed town which owes its existence to the genial and graceful humour of Mr. Poole. We attempted to see the Library; but, of course, the Librarian was keeping holiday on this particular morning (our friend never knew him take such a liberty before) ; and, therefore, we missed the autograph letters of Lady

relations of flesh and blood, by associating with it lighter vices and aims, and even the show of good-fellowship, which draw it within the sphere of our habits and sympathies; thus stamping upon it the poet's warrant for a living man; and then representing its arts as triumphant over the simplicity of a generous nature, and making that nature its instrument, over female loveliness and virtue? I say *triumphant*, because, though Iago is led off in dogged silence to a threatened punishment, his work is achieved; his very detection is essential to the perfection of the misery he has wrought; and to the spectators who have witnessed the "vile success" of his stratagems, the rack with which he is menaced is an empty name. But I believe that Shakspeare dreamed of no such unholy purpose; that he wrote on fervently to supply the agencies for the scenes which lived before him, and to produce the fore-shadowed catastrophe; that the genius which often, with such divine felicity, moulded his rapid creations into harmony beyond the reach of art, has for once presented disproportion; and that the question which Othello, in his mortal agony, so naturally desires his attendants to ask of Iago—"*Why* he hath thus ensnared my soul and body?" and which the "demi-devil" refuses to answer, might have been asked as vainly of the mighty poet who moulded him.

Jane Grey, which would have interested us more than the manufactories; nor did we meet our English-loving boatman. We went, accompanied by Zurich's blue stream, the Limmat, to Baden; a simple place compared to its romantic and ruining German namesake; but nestling in a hollow of peculiar beauty. We dined here; and, while the repast was preparing, climbed the topmost height of some lofty castle ruins, which are so blended with the trees and earth, and flowers, of a charming succession of walks and staircases winding spirally from the densest part of the town, and directly overlooking its streets, that you cannot tell where the natural begins or the artificial ends—a delightful confusion; and at the top, amidst battlements like rocks, and rocks like battlements, commanding a lovely prospect of the deep valley. Hence we proceeded through Brugg, seated almost in hearing of the ripple of the three great rivers—the Limmat, the Reuss, and the Aar, which join in a plain below it, to make a glorious contribution to the Rhine. After leaving Brugg, the road rises with a gentle inclination for several miles, which tempted me to walk on alone before the carriage. Having reached the summit just as the sun was setting, I was enchanted by a view of the Alps, far more comprehensive, though more distant, than that from the Cathedral of Berne, or from the last ridge of the Jura. As I believed that I had quitted the snowy mountains for years, if not for ever, I felt a delight I cannot express in this unexpected opportunity—and such an opportunity!—of bidding to their congregated majesties a solemn farewell. I was alone; a huge weather-stained forlorn inn, standing amidst tottering stables and outhouses at the crest of the ascent, made the solitude more perceptible; the table-land stretched tame and almost objectless for miles on one side; on the other, a wood descended to the plain of a huge valley, in which the Castle of Hapsburg dimly seen, the small cradle of the imperial House of Austria, seemed to whisper of half-forgotten crimes and

tyrannies, and of warriors long ago mingled with the dust; and beyond, rimming the immense horizon, were the innumerable icy pinnacles and domes; and though they had mostly grown spectral in the gray light, two long slants among them yet glowed with the western sun, like some passage of long past experience suddenly gleaming from among the mass of forgotten things, in happy distinctness, at a chance flash of memory. I gazed upon them till all their forms grew indistinct, and then slowly and sadly descended the hill; but, becoming half-alarmed at the long interval which had elapsed since I left the carriage, without being overtaken by it, I returned to the top and awaited its arrival, and there tried to distinguish some Alpine shape in the misty distance, but in vain—I had looked my last. All was right; the carriage came up, and we went on to Frick in the dark; and thence the next morning to Basle. Nothing worthy recollection presented itself during this day's journey, except the Rhine at Rheinfelden, where we breakfasted, rushing beneath the old village tottering on its edge and beneath the bridge which crosses it, with an almost fearful power. We reached Basle in time to lose ourselves in its narrow streets, in a search after no less an object than its cathedral; to find it and to feel the peculiar majesty of its masses of reddish brown; and to admire the vast baths on the Rhine, to which we were informed, at almost a nominal price, the people of the city have access—a noble use to make of this noble river. It may almost be doubted whether the duty of washing the population of a densely-built and closely-inhabited city does not even precede in urgency, if not in importance, that of teaching it. When once the "unwashed" artificer is unwashed no longer, he is freed from all which, even in point of taste, can excuse a reluctance to his complete recognition as a brother by the loftiest in station or in intellect of his fellow-men, and to his cordial

admission to their sympathy in those great objects which good men have all in common.

By the combined powers of railway, steam and the Cologne Company, we passed in one long day from Basle to Mannheim, embarking at Strasbourg from the same wharf in the midst of the town at which we had landed,—and in another day, almost as long, from Mannheim to Cologne; two prodigious days, cheered in the intervals of scenic interest by two novels of Mr. James—"The False Heir," and "Morley Ernstein,"—pirated editions of course, which, we bought for a trifle at Lucerne, and which, with other English books, which we had purchased, in justice to their author's copyright we threw away at the mouth of the Thames. Another day brought us from Cologne to Brussels —allowing an hour for the comfort of an excellent dinner at the *table d'hôte*, at Verviers, and the discomfort of two hours' delay at the station at Liége, occasioned by the detected imperfection of the rope which ought to have drawn the train to the top of the inclined plane with which the railway commences,—and might have been discovered still more disagreeably a few moments later. As of course no substitute was ready, we were obliged to wait while another rope was obtained—some said woven. The interval, however, was not devoid of amusement; for the travellers of all classes and several nations came out from the carriages in which they were seated, and solaced the time with such refreshments as the neighbouring taverns supplied, scattering themselves, in motley groups, about the lumber-choked yard, and though uttering many expressions of impatience, were generally merrier when they really started than when they stopped. Nor was the imperturbable gravity of the superintendent, who was pointed at, talked at, and talked to, as the cause of the evil, the least amusing feature in the aspect of the scene: he looked on without moving a muscle; generally stood mute as if not hearing when pelted with

inquiries as to the probability of the train starting at all; and when, at last, a very shrill lady-voice pierced his dull ear, shook his head so awfully as to put an end to all attempts at questioning.

It was late in the evening before the train reached Brussels—a city wholly new to us—but, perhaps "for this night only," the time of our arrival was fortunate; for, to our amazement, the city was one blaze of light: statues, squares, pavilions, park-gates, all flashed with coloured lamps, or waved with open jets of fire—a scene of perfect enchantment; for I never witnessed an illumination in which fire of various colours had so entirely displaced the common aspect of things; nor did the scene lose its lustre in our eyes, when we learned that it was thus decked with flame, in honour of our own Queen, who slept that night at a country palace of the King of Belgium, a few miles distant from his capital. We were fortunate enough to escape from the terrible imprisonment of the omnibus, which kidnapped us at the station, in time to obtain accommodation at one of the hotels, which were crowded with visitors, whom the Royal guests had attracted to Brussels.

The next day we spent in exploring the field of Waterloo, which I heartily wish we had left unvisited. Never, surely, was the scene of any great action so far despoiled of interest by petty, harassing, vexatious details as this. We could not, indeed, expect much of striking memorial in a mere battle-field; vastness and silence—the faithful preservation of such vestiges as are most closely associated with the master-minds that here played out the game of death—are all that could be wished for; but these, as far as possible, have been confused, or destroyed. As if the level plain, beneath which so many brave soldiers are reposing, were not as appropriate a monument as a mound of the same earth, the inclination of the ground which the British forces occupied, has been violated, in order to scoop out materials for an ugly mass of dirt, surmounted by a frightful lion:—

O, how unlike the monumental lion of Lucerne! The scene of carnage is changed for one of civil spoliation; for every step is infested with lazy, urgent guides, or beggars; some thrusting their physical infirmities, some their false relics, in your face; and some putting forward nothing but their sturdy prayers, ready to be turned into curses; all around you is pettiness, pretence, and plunder. A kindred spirit of mean exaction pervades the miserable hotels, at one of which you are obliged to stop,—the host charging you the price of *Chambertin* for *vin ordinaire* you cannot drink; and the waiter is astonished if you do not pay him handsomely for bringing it into the room, as if he had some hand in winning the battle; while the low, white-washed walls, and pot-house chairs, and flaring-coloured prints, complete the sense of discomfort. Then, in order to substitute the idea of carnage in its shocking realities—too recent to be blended with events which are removed by time beyond a relation to surviving sorrows—for the greater feelings the scene should suggest, as the mighty witness to the adamantive part of British nature and the catastrophe of Napoleon's career, you are beset with such relics as the skull of a soldier, with teeth of horrid whiteness, to indicate that he fell in the bloom of life. The day was intensely hot; the road dusty, flinty, arid; so that the shade of the dullest fir grove I ever traversed was a welcome solace; and the *voiturier* deaf to all our entreaties that he would move faster than at a foot's pace; who thus gave to our misery a ludicrous completeness.

There was only one moment in which I felt the awful spirit of the scene:—passing through a small angular paled garden, planted with dusty shrubs, to reach the steps of the mound (for which, of course, you pay) where some bees were buzzing over two or three wild flowers, the faint noise rendering the sense of stillness deeper, suggested the contrast between the images of peaceful life and the horrors which had raged there; but the feeling was immediately

dissipated by a tribe of dirty boys with bullets and brass buttons for sale. We went, however, to the play in the evening; and *assisted* in more than the French sense at the welcome of a fair and frightened *débutante* in a lively operetta; and became reconciled to ourselves and our species.

The next day we left Brussels for Ostend, passing by Ghent and Bruges—just catching a glimpse of their old historical towers from the railway-stations. Those of Ghent had a charm for me beyond that of history, for they have been associated for all time with the meditative beauty of that great dramatic poem, "Philip Van Artevelde;" steeped by genius in its serenest light; and now recalling many wise sentiments and thoughts shaded with beauty, which have an immortal home beneath their shadows.

At the railway-station of Ghent, where a stoppage of some length occurred, and where the carriages were changed, we were involved in perplexity which the hurry of the scene increased, and from which we were relieved by the active courtesy of an English nobleman, whom we did not then know, and to whom we were unknown except as his country-people, travelling without a courier to help, or a servant to retard them. As he afterwards discovered himself to be one with whose affairs our public have been often busy, and who has been perhaps as much abused as any one of his time, I think it right to allude to kindnesses which, under other circumstances, should rest in the privacy in which they were offered. After he had placed his servant at our command, and pressed his fruit and Champagne on our ladies, and carried us through the intricacies of the railway-office, he excited our surprise by speaking familiarly of the Duke of Wellington as his uncle, and apprised us, before he knew our names, that he was the Mr. Long Wellesley, of whom, as he said, we had heard so much, and was now Lord Wellesley. His courtesies did not terminate with the exigency which had first called them forth; for, when we

reached Ostend, he insisted on showing us the way to the proper hotel; kept off the crowd of idlers who hung on our march with good-humoured pertinacity; carried one of our packages; and refused to leave us until he had consigned us to the especial care of the landlady, with injunctions to attend to our comfort, which were followed, in a manner which proved that a genial influence had not been exerted for us in vain. As I cannot help regarding this series of unaffected kindnesses bestowed on strangers without any claim but that of country on the party who offered them, as indicating something beyond the value of the mere acts themselves—valuable as they were to us—I hope it is not unfitting, against the manifold evil which has been thought and said of Lord Wellesley (now Lord Mornington), to offer the evidence of facts which, if slight in themselves, speak to me of good which, having deeply impressed us, may have a similar influence on the opinions of others who, like me, know only the *outlines* of a life's history, to which a little true personal knowledge may impart a happier colouring.

After dinner, we enjoyed a fine sunset from the long shelving bank of Ostend; embarked at nine o'clock on board the steamer; and, after a calm night's passage, reached *our* custom-house early on the following day. What we there suffered and saw, before we were finally dismissed, is not now worth relating or recollecting; for I have faith in the old maxim "that when things have come to the worst they must mend," and, therefore, I feel assured that an amendment in the processes of this scene of English discredit and of all mankind's discomfort, if not already accomplished, must be at hand.

In estimating the wealth with which the mind may be endowed by excursions as rapid as these into foreign lands, I think it will be found to consist almost exclusively in the images which the scenes of the external world have im-

pressed upon it, and in the feelings they have excited. It would be obviously absurd to hope that, from intercourse so transient and imperfect as the railway carriage, the steamboat and the *table d'hôte* allow, any knowledge of the character of the people of the fair regions at which a holiday traveller glances can be acquired, beyond a few picturesque aspects of glancing light and shadow. You cannot, indeed, pass through any section of Germany, however rapidly, without becoming sensible to the charm of that unaffected good-nature with which all classes seem imbued; associated in the women with a quiet serene grace, a benevolent repose of manner; and in the men, especially the young students, with a brotherly affection for each other, and a disposition to be and to make happy, which refers their university duels to the mere tyranny of custom. Indeed, the gashes which these encounters have left, may generally be observed scarring faces which beam with good-humour, and show how little concern hatred or envy, or any real passion, has in producing those passages of foolish bravery. In Switzerland, it would be a sad waste of precious hours to spend them in endeavouring to pluck out the heart of the mysteries of character which lie within the human forms which are dwarfed by the mountains among which they move and perish, while the mountains themselves, with the snows they sustain and the streams they nurture, freely expand to the gaze, and invite the eye, the heart, and the imagination to concur in holding the most intimate communion with their grandeurs.

But the knowledge of scenery which is achieved by such excursions is all clear, unalloyed, and priceless gain; for it not only enriches the chamber of memory with the pictures which can be expanded at will, but nourishes the power of appreciating all other kindred scenes, and redoubles the charm of those we may afterwards enjoy at home. When, therefore, we pursue the inevitable comparison between the alpine scenery of Switzerland and that which lies among

our own mountains of Scotland, Wales, and the north of England, we institute no invidious scrutiny, but trace out the links of that process by which familiarity with one form of nature increases the facility of appreciating others resembling it, and heightens the enjoyment of all.

The pleasure which is derived from the contemplation of fine scenery is, I apprehend, nearly in proportion to the power with which the mind grasps its colours and forms, and realises a kindred between their attributes and its own. The mere presentment of the mightiest external varieties of the earth's surface to the eye of curiosity, except in the comparatively rare instances when they melt into harmonious pictures, can excite, at most, only a sort of stupefied wonder. To the youth of a poet, gifted with a peculiar sense of beauty, they may be, as they were to Wordsworth, a passion, "an appetite, a feeling, and a love;" though even then it may be doubted whether the premature development of deeper sources of pleasure has not unconsciously blended the spiritual with the external. But to children, in general, the Book of Nature, spread out before them in all its wildest sublimities, lies unread; and it is not until they have begun, not merely to think and feel, but to reflect on their own past thoughts and feelings, which they have gradually associated with the scenes in which their emotions have been born and cherished, that they begin to understand and to love the world without them. In this respect, the experience of every youth of sensibility and reflection, is a picture in little of the history of his species. Old as the world has grown in the arts of life and death, and early as divine inspiration enkindled the spirit of poetry in its favoured inheritors, it is only in times comparatively modern that the mind seems to have awakened to a sense of its external grandeurs. In the Hebrew sacred poetry, each image is singly contemplated as attesting the glory of God, or is employed as the symbol of his terrors; the breath of a pastoral simplicity is wafted from the depths of patriarchal

ages; Mount Sinai flashes with the terrors of the law; and the harp of David sometimes trembles with the sweet influences of sky and earth; but there is no picture, enriched by the heart's experiences, to break the elemental vastness of the imagery in which the voice of eternity is heard. In the Homeric poems,—all vivid as they are—

> "As full of spirit as the month of May,
> And gorgeous as the sun at Midsummer,"

the pictures are of the camp, the battle, the city, the fleet —not of the mountain and flood; and the frequent similes by which they are studded, instead of indicating an aptitude in the poet's mind for informing the shapes of the universe with life and passion, or clothing human affections and powers with the aspects of matter, show, by the imperfect associations which often introduce them, and the mosaic air they give to the composition they variegate, how faintly the sympathies between the world of matter and of thought were perceived even by the genius which inspired them. As the poetry of Greece became more refined, the sentiment of scenery was still further repressed, until it was lost in the tendency to make all things subservient to the beauty of form. It breathes again in Virgil, but still with a subdued and courtly sweetness; and scarcely is felt again till it bursts out in lusty life in Chaucer. Hence, after mingling with the flush of Elizabethan genius; enriching the passion of Shakspeare; mantling in the luxury of Fletcher; and embossing the stateliness of Milton: it was crushed by the iron sense of Dryden; dissipated amidst the artificial brilliancies of Pope; and feebly held its obscure way beneath the frost-like etiquette and sparkling conceit of our Augustan age. In the revival of the true poetical spirit it has expanded triumphantly among us: breaking forth with gorgeous enthusiasm in Thomson; becoming coldly pure in Cowper; shedding a consecrating influence on a multitude of glorious scenes in Scott; and enabling us to consecrate all scenes for ourselves by the teachings of

Wordsworth. No one can doubt that the deeper seriousness which Christianity has shed through our human life, has attached itself to the silent forms of nature, and has given them an interest which, reflected and reduplicated by our poetry and romance, is now not confined to men of genius or even to men of thoughtful leisure, but is felt more or less vividly as a pervading sentiment of common existence; gleaming in upon the busiest hours; and deepening the long-drawn sigh for repose from the bustle of the world, with a longing after the visitations of beauty and the approaches of wisdom.

It may, at least, be doubted whether the love which the inhabitants of mountain districts bear to their father-land, involves any sense of the grandeur of its scenes, beyond the sanctity which the few events of their simple lives attach to the objects immediately associated with them. As far as I have been able to ascertain, a feeling of grandeur and beauty is not often expanded within them; though the semblances of it soon become affected, when tourists teach them its value in the market for the romantic. However this may be, I believe the experience of most of those whose sensibilities are awakened by the presence of material greatness, will concur with my own, that the first effect is that of wonder and depression; that the spirits sink among great mountain tops almost as if beneath a weight of care; and some shivering sense of oppression comes over us like that which I have imperfectly, and perhaps, extravagantly, described as chilling me in the huge Alpine solitude among the heights above Airolo, at the foot of the St. Gothard. This feeling of lonely sadness arises from the susceptibility of the mind to the impressions of the regions around it, with a conscious want of powers adequate to spiritualize the gigantic images and to make them its own; and it will continue so long as there is intellectual activity enough to desire a communion which there is not force enough to realise. He who is thus subjected to the forms of matter

feels like a dwarf in the abode of giants, which, he is told, should be his home and is his inheritance, but in which he discovers nothing for him but frowning tyranny. But to an active sensibility the recurrence not only to the same scene, but to scenes on a scale of correspondent or kindred majesty, gradually overcomes the strangeness; "the divinity that stirs within us" asserts its relation to the huge shapes around us; old sensations of tranquil beauty cleave to the lower and lovelier features of the mighty scene; and the chill waste becomes *aired* by the warmth of human affections. Not only do we learn to people the fastnesses of nature with "imaginary puissance;" to feel in the huge breast of the mountain a sustaining power; to grasp on the verge of the black precipice a giddy joy; to recognise the spirit of loveliness subduing mere bleak sublimity to its uses; but the sense of other moments of precious experience heightens the present, and makes us feel at home in the wildest solitude. It is not necessary to this reduplication of sentiment and delight that the mind should be conscious of the scenes which have enriched it; the silent spirit of other days is near us unseen, and sheds an interest at once strange and familiar on objects upon which for the first time we gaze. By this cause alone can I explain the homefelt charm which always spreads delight over the mind on the view of the distant ocean, serene in some tranquil light. The object itself cold, desolate, vast, unbounded, restless, ever-changing, can offer no material repose congenial to the world-vexed spirit; and yet, to me at least, it is never stretched out in soft blue, or flecked by clouds, or quivering in moonlight, without imparting a sense of home. This feeling—which I believe is common—can only be accounted for by the many half-forgotten hours in which the same great object has been gazed on, while a thousand serious thoughts idle musings (all traced in the immortal Book of Memory) have attached themselves to its expanse, and are ever faintly reflected from the lonely tranquillity of the ocean

field. I cannot, therefore, help thinking that, whatever may be the experience of the few who are endowed with insight into the mysteries of creation beyond their fellows, it is better for the mass—among whom I rejoice to believe the true love of external nature is largely diffused—to have that love first expanded and nurtured in youth among quiet scenes of English beauty; to trace back its throbbings to the time when the little school-boy, on his hard pillow, has half remembered, half dreamed of the fields and wood-walks he had carelessly paced in free childhood; and embracing them again with his holiday vision, has first felt that sweet faintness of the heart with which a recurrence to old scenes affects us; to embrace by the light of that love the grander scenes of its own land; and after such cultivation and enjoyment in his own country, to enrich it with the mightier grandeur of Switzerland, or bathe the delighted spirit among the luxuries of Italy.

The ice-clad mountains, surveyed in the heat and blaze of summer, are so entirely unlike any appearances of earth we can behold in our own islands, that the Swiss scenery only becomes a fair subject of comparison with the British, when they are excluded from the prospect, as they often are, in the depths of successive valleys. In their absence, the advantage of the Swiss scenes will be found in their richer affluence of accompaniment; that of British, in that individuality of character which partly belongs to their own features, and partly consists in their aptitude for blending with the feelings and thoughts of him who loves them. In reflecting on the *unsnowed* valleys of Switzerland, we shall find that the difference in their favour does not consist of the mere superiority of elevation in the heights—from 5,000 to 8,000 feet on their average, above ours from 2,000 to 3,000—but of all the prodigal beauty which the greater elevations nurture, —the number and the power of the fountains which gush out from them; the groves that flash or lower

from their sides, giving you the sense at once of a hundred thickets; the steeps and turrets and acclivities of rocks, nurturing in their interstices breeze-sown clumps and festoons of wild flowers, each a fairy garden; these spring and cluster and accumulate, in proportion as the mountain side which nourishes them, expands. So far is it from being true that, in nature, sublimity and beauty are commonly divorced, that experience will show that the first is almost always made up of the last; the nobler the outline of the mountain, the more various and exquisite are the details of loveliness which fill it. Thus, in Switzerland, you have rarely to try to exalt objects in your thoughts by recollecting how many feet they rise above the level of the sea; nor to endeavour to trace a faint outline of a distant height, 'as in Scotland and Wales; everything around is vaster than your conception, and you almost grudge the excess of grandeur, which you feel, in some of its varieties, must escape even your memory. So you have never, when you visit a famous waterfall, to accept the apology of the guide for the absence of water—to hear grievous complaints of fantastic summer's heat—and to be convinced that the cascade is very fine when the weather is very wet; on the contrary, the resources of the ice-born and ice-fed streams enable them to maintain the delightful peculiarity of being most abundant when the sun's power is most supreme. Nothing in our home scenery even suggests the idea of a river like the Rhine; not only in the collected majesty of its German course, but in its bounteous azure above the fall at Schaffhausen, and the huge masses of radiant white which it pours over the rocks. So the Aar, the Limmat, the Lower Reuss, the Rhône as it gushes out of the Lake of Geneva in its short-lived purity, are not only superior to our rivers, but give an image of the lovely continuity of living water they never suggested even to a dream. Some of our rivers have, indeed, a character and charm of their own. The Severn glistening through the meadows above Shrews-

bury so rapidly, in proportion to its strength, that you almost fancy it a torrent which is passing entirely away, is as different in spirit from the majestic movement of the Thames, which ripples among the osiers and circles round the water-lilies at Lechlade with a certain awful serenity which it never loses in its weed-obstructed and lily-crowned course, till it resigns its individuality to the tide,—as if the streams were not of the same element; so the Trent, the Clyde, the Forth, each has its own character; but none have a plenitude of water until they become estuaries. Happily associated with this wealth of nature in Switzerland is the superior greenness preserved to late autumn; the exuberance of flowers; and the glory of orchards—making "Hesperian fables true—if true here only." On the lakes alone, this prodigality of nature is unfelt; for the deep basin can only be full; and the simpler the accompaniments of a lake, the more perfect its impression. With the exception of the Lake of Wallenstadt, and probably the grander portion of the Lake of the Four Cantons, which I have not seen, I think the Swiss lakes inferior to those of Scotland and Westmoreland, in the proper attributes of their class;—nor do the Swiss mountains enclose basins so lovely as the tarns which, in deepest sable, lie embosomed in the folds of Loughrigg Fell, beneath the precipices of Cader Idris and Helvellyn, and the Langdale Pikes; and of which you may reckon twenty, even through the dividing mists from the top of Snowdon, each uplifted far among the hills, with its dark fortress of rock casting a congenial gloom over its black mirror.

Perhaps the superior riches with which the Swiss scenes are generally endowed, may supply one reason why ours are more capable of being grasped by human affections; as wealth subsides into a vague notion when we cannot count it. But besides the circumstance that, in point of extent, our greatest mountains, and those most perfect in themselves, may be brought within the compass of a day's observation;

they have a peculiarity of character which I have not felt in Switzerland, impressed on one circle of objects; with the exception of the ascent of the Ticino, and the valley of Chamouni. Of the four British mountains which possess the most powerful influence for the imagination—Snowdon, Cader Idris, Helvellyn, and Ben Nevis—each has its own attributes; and though in each the most striking feature is that of dark precipice, this is so differently exhibited in each, that if any one familiar with them all could see a single precipice apart from its accessories, he might tell to which mountain it belongs. Of these mountains Snowdon forms beyond comparison the noblest aggregate; because except on the side opposite Carnarvon, its upper portion is all mighty frame-work; a top uplifted on vast buttresses; disdaining the round lumpish earth, and spreading out skeleton arms towards heaven, and embracing on each side huge hollows, made more awful by the red tints of the copper ore which deepens among its shadows, and gleams through the scanty herbage of its loveliest pathways*. Cader Idris is a narrow ridge, upraised on

* Perhaps I love Snowdon the better on account of its being the first great mountain I ever knew. I have ascended it several times;—from Capel Carig, from Llanberis, and from Beddgelert;—the last time on 1st October, 1839, from the latter place. I am tempted to extract the following account of my ascent, from some notes of an Autumn in Wales, made shortly afterwards, as a companion to my attempted descriptions of Continental scenery.

ASCENT OF SNOWDON.

The morning dawned misty yet promising, and I engaged a car to take me three miles on to the place where the ascent commences. As I rode on the Carnarvon road, speculating on the state of things in the higher regions, I observed a pinnacle shot out its head from the mist far into the sky. I asked my guide what height it was;—I was told that it was the peak of Snowdon. Seen over the round breast of an intervening hill, it did not look higher than many other points, but was remarkable for its spiral form, and was surmounted, certainly not adorned, by what here appeared to be a little stick, but which is a great piece of timber stuck up in the midst of a heap of stones—all reared by order of the Government for a landmark—as if the mountain were not great enough without the addition of this Cockney crown! We proceeded, keeping this tall head in view, till we reached a gate about three miles on the road, where we quitted the car and began the ascent. We now saw the whole of the south-east

one side on a line of precipices, wreathed up into pillared points, while on the other sides it presents a rounded mass ; and is, therefore, far inferior to Snowdon in outline ; but its summit overlooks a greater and more awful tarn than Snowdon upholds, and it has one scene just behind and a little below its summit—a small tarn lying beneath a huge rock, sometimes called the *Crater of Cader*, which is more impressive than any sequestered scene in Snowdon. The

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side of the mountain, which presented directly before us its second peak, with the highest just peering over it. Here the mountain did not, at first sight, appear high, not nearly so high as a slender rock we had passed—but on looking attentively at it, you could fancy it crouching to conceal its height. Its aspect was that of a stony hill, surmounted by a green shoulder, on which appeared a steep upward track, with a tall peak just peeping over the ridge, and beyond a long regular slant dark against the sky. We walked along a plashy path, very gently rising, to a farm-house, passed through its yard, and continued by the side of a little stream, curving upwards through the dark rushy meadow, till we reached the first serious ascent among heaps of rocks, which bestrew the lower part of the hill. We now began to feel ourselves rapidly rising, winding about among grass and pieces of rock, till we reached a great flat stone on which we rested, and the view from which was remarkable. Before us lay the simple unadorned lake of Bettwys, with its one great rock rising to shield it; beyond, seen through two ranges of hill, the towers of Carnarvon Castle; and below, but apparently quite close, Anglesea, seen mapped out to Holyhead. The sea spread its lovely blue on each side of Anglesea—but the Menai Straits were entirely hidden, and the effect was that of standing on a terrace of which the towers of Carnarvon formed the battlements, and looking directly down on a huge garden below. Hence ascending, we found the second peak rising far higher above us than the summit itself had appeared from the plain. A spring of clear, cold, exquisite water detained us a few minutes, as it is the highest on this side of the mountain. On the Capel-Carig side there is a spring not very far below the summit. Here I tasted the water, having prepared the way by a little brandy, with which the guide had taken care that we should be provided. Here we saw the sea in front as well as to the west, between the huge openings of the mountain, and looked into a great valley branching off in that direction to the sea, which contains two lakes within its depth, between which Wilson sat when drawing Snowdon. A little onward we reached the margin of the first great hollow of the mountain, not quite so grand as that below the summit of Cader,—holding three small pools, instead of (like that) one great tarn. Along the side-hollow, up the shining track, we now laboured, and found it by far the hardest work of the ascent, though not so hard as the Fox's Path of Cader. Having surmounted this stiff brae, we turned to the left under the second peak beside the precipice, and soon came to a ridge connecting it with the summit—the grandest part, by far, of the ascent. We now looked into a greater precipice on the opposite side—the greatest of all Snowdon's hollows—overshadowed by a shelf of rock of the boldest form, holding a

one rock which shades it rises into a solemn peak, like the top of a Gothic arch of the broadest kind, and is covered with lichens and mosses of dark shaggy green—rendering the sense of antiquity more palpable by a natural venerableness than it is in thunder-riven stone. Helvellyn rises in gentle pastoral swell also to the brink of deep precipices—not expanded as those of Cader in a straight line, but following the curve of a series of coves, divided from each other

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little lake in its depth, and descending to a green ridge, over which the road from Beddgelert to Capel-Carig, in the vale of Gwynnett, is seen, like a line of blue among the green. Beyond the upward ridge I had glimpses of a third hollow—that which is ascended from Capel-Carig—of the same character, but not quite so large. Hence the path to the summit was sometimes on one side the ridge, sometimes on the other, sometimes on its top; but quite easy, and (in spite of the fables of guide-books, which talk about people dying with fright in it) quite safe. After about two hours and a half's walk from the road, we reached the summit, where I partook of some sandwiches and brandy-and-water with great relish. Here the mountain seems drawn to a point, as by five or six cords, shouldering to the plain; and within these to embrace great hollows, more or less precipitous, with pools or tarns in their depths. Near the top it is a mere bunch of ridges, surmounted by one slender apex, defended by rocky fragments like huge tusks. Climbing the mound of stones, I saw the entire panorama, in its kind matchless, but not so grand as the lower view from the ridge connecting the second peak with the summit. To the west lay Anglesea, the sea beyond, and I thought I caught a glimpse of the Wicklow mountains. To the north Moel Siabod and the great mountains between Capel-Carig and the sea, forming the pass through which the road passes among great bare stony rocks glittering in the sun. To the south the mountains of Merioneth, among which Cader was easily to be distinguished, and for some minutes a gleam of light revealed the very side of its central precipices along which I had lately climbed, and beyond—blue in the distance—crouched Plinlimmon. To the east a wilderness of mountain, and round at least two-thirds of the view the blue ocean poured, as round the Shield of Achilles. The most remarkable feature of this great prospect is the mountain tarns, which gleam upon you from the bosoms of the hills. I counted twenty-three. Among them, one very far up its own mountain, gleamed out as from a brimming basin, over the Holyhead road, just visible in its huge bed of rock, at least 1500 feet above the neighbouring track of human traffic. I remained on the summit nearly an hour, during which time I was joined by a young friend and two ladies, who had ascended from Llanberris. On the descent we walked over the crown of the second peak, whence, and from the ridge, the view is really nobler than from the summit, because the neighbouring mountains are seen in nobler proportion. The distances, never very clear, grew more hazy; but they are never very important in mountain prospects. The guide offered to take me down into the Vale of Gwynett, through the great hollow; but I declined, fearing the wetness of the ground, and thinking the usual descent sufficiently grand; and so it was.

by descending ledges, one of fearful narrowness called Striden Edge; the others forming huge solid buttresses of stone, intermingled with short grass and coarse rushes. Ben Nevis, by far the loftiest*, is a vast bulk, slanting almost regularly to the top, except on the north-east side, where he, too, has his precipice—but differing wholly in character from those of Snowdon, Cader Idris, or Helvellyn; it deeply indents the mountain edge, as it rises with a succession of narrow openings, almost like chimneys, supported by huge pillars, till it reaches the height of 1500 feet at the summit from the upland valley which forms its base; and seen from the bottom, is of fearful blackness. Our noblest mountain passes have, like our mountains, a distinct character impressed upon them; that of Llanberris, for example, though it might be described by the same general attributes, is as essentially different from that of Kirkstone, as a pastoral valley is from a stony defile; while that of Glencoe not only surpasses all others in the British isles in grandeur and extent, but stands apart in the mind, as of another order of sublimity, as if it belonged to a different world. Its serrated ridge on one side, terminating in huge slaty declivities of glittering sable, in the expansion of its opening gorge, and its huge round masses of rock on the other, looking as if bowed down by some awful pressure from beneath the snow-cleft of Mount Bedin, require no story of treacherous murder to make it the most fearful of earthly scenes. In Switzerland the tourist will traverse many rock-walled valleys, the sides of which rise up to twice the elevation of its highest ridges, as in the road from Chamouni, below the Buet to the Tête Noire; but none of these will ever displace Glencoe from its solemn station in the memory.

The scenery of North Wales has a nearer affinity to that

* This mountain, after retaining for ages the supremacy for height among British hills, has been recently despoiled of its sovereignty by measurements, which are said to have ascertained that Ben Mac Dui in Aberdeenshire is a few feet higher. After this, what security have we for any glory of this world.

of Switzerland than any other in Britain. It has no scenes so mighty as some in the Highlands of Scotland ; but the blending of the features of beauty and grandeur is more frequent and more perfect in Wales. There, some of the valleys, as, for example, that of Gwynett, on the east side of Snowdon, which seen from the top of the Pass of Llanberris, with the peak of Mount Siabod in front, might be taken for a miniature of the grandest Swiss scenery, not crowned by the icy pinnacles. The scenery of the English Lakes excels both and all, in the extraordinary variety it comprises of the noble and the lovely, within a compass which the mind is capable of grasping ; and which the eye may drink in, during one autumn day. Indeed, one beautiful piece of upland, Loughrigg Fell, might seem a platform—if such a phrase did not belie its waving, rock-ribbed, and pinnacled surface—built by Nature, to enable her true lovers to enjoy, in quick succession, the most splendid variety she can exhibit. On one side, from the gently ascending path, bordered by scanty heather, you embrace the broader portion of Windermere, spreading out its arms as if to embrace the low and lovely hills that enfold it—a view without an angle or a contrast—a scene of perfect harmony and peace. Ascend a lofty slab of rock, not many paces onward, and you have lying before you the delicious vale of the Rotha—a stream gliding through the greenest meadows—with Fairfield beyond, expanding its huge arms as of a giant's chair, and with Fox How in the midst, where the great and good Dr. Arnold—great in goodness—embraced the glories of the external world, with all the earnestness of his generous and simple nature, and nourished that sense of the imaginative and harmonious aspects of humanity and faith, which grew clearer and deeper as he advanced in years. Wind your way through two small valleys, each having its own oval basin, and from another height you may look down on the still mirror of Rydalmere, with its small central island, the nest of herons ; and following the

valley to Grasmere with its low white church-tower, beyond the figured crest of Heln Crag, behold the vast triangle of Skiddaw filling the distance; while midway, just rising above green mountains, you may see the topmost *rind* of Helvellyn, curved in air, with one black descent just indicated: and, when the eye has been satiated with loveliness, look down just below on a mansion at the foot of Nab Scar, the dwelling of the Poet, not of these only, but of all earth's scenes; who, disdaining the frequent description of particular combinations of its beauties, has unveiled the sources of profoundest sentiment they contain; and, more than any writer who ever lived, has diffused that love of external nature which now sheds its purifying influence abroad among our people. Pass from thence to the highest point of all this region, and look down, beyond the black round tarn of Loughrigg, into a magnificent chaos, the Langdale vales, with the ribbed spike of Scawfell beyond them, and in the midst those Pikes, which, yielding to many of the surrounding hills in height, surpass them all in form; and if here they shall seem diminished by the presence of loftier objects, call to mind their aspect in a scene you now overlook, and to which an hour's walk may bring you—one like none other in the world; place yourself near the lonely cottage in which Wordsworth's Solitary dwelt, by the side of Blea Tarn, where you can see nothing but the bold opening of the upland valley, between two russet slopes, and the mass which completely fills it—the Langdale Pikes, with the Gimmer Crag between, towering from the unseen floor of the lower vale, an enormous cathedral of nature, sustained by huge swelling columns, rising into a cone on one side, a tower in front, and a mass of pinnacles on the other extremity; alone, perfect, of one colour—of brownish stone, shaded by the green of a million showers! Does the experience which the eye and the heart acquire among larger scenes in Switzerland detract from the enjoyment of these? No: on the contrary, the education both have received

there, prepares them for a keener perception of these the grandeurs of our English home; while the very comparison which they provoke enriches and multiplies the associations of which our own scenery is suggestive.

But the snowy mountains—the higher Alps—what shall be said of them? That they disturb the mind with a new sensation, which, when its first perplexity is removed, is pure and elevating, cannot be doubted; but they can never take a hold on human feelings, at least in proportion to their greatness. The reason is, that being, for the most part, far beyond the reach of mortal steps, and incapable of ever becoming the scenes of human passions, loves, joys, and sorrows, the mind cannot acquire familiarity with them, except as they may receive and reflect the influences of the atmosphere and the heavens. You cannot imbue their peaked tops or glistening slants with the earnestness of thought, or trace in them symbols of the history of man, or of the tragedy of his life, as in the rocks and caverns, and forests of the earthy mountains. For the same reason, the neighbourhood of these splendid pinnacles does not oppress the stranger like that of the brown precipices and dark rocks of inferior hills; for the mind has no cue which compels it to try to understand them—no imperfect sympathy with them to disturb it; and is contented to wonder. They are, on this outward world, to the masses of unsnowed matter, what the Arabian Tales are to the epic and the tragic in literature—they are the cold romance, the graceful extravagance, the visionary speculations of nature—a miracle tinged by the skies, as wild fiction is by aerial fancy. The very contradiction in feeling which the presentment of huge fields of snow to the blazing sun implies; though implying, also, the sublimity of height; more resembles the greatest efforts of the fancy, than of the imagination, which deals not with strange coincidences, but with elemental truths. The snowy region is the region of enchantment, in

which "no touch of nature makes the whole world kin," but in which the powers of nature are strangely constrained and fantastically disposed. If Lord Byron, in those celebrated lines on the Alps, in which he represents nature as having "throned eternity in icy halls of cold sublimity," meant to imply that permanence belongs to their icy palaces, the sentiment is the reverse of true; desolation is the only active power among them; and the exquisite beauties of the snow-caves are more fragile than the spider's web,—changed, vanishing, renewed, in a thousand delicacies, of frost in every summer's day, and the night which follows it. The river which issues, in triumphant life, from the foot of the glacier, seems like one of the fabled knights breaking from the chains of some long enchantment, and rioting in the sense of regained natural power. While, therefore, the snowy mountains form a new and most glorious spectacle, which frequent visits will expand and heighten, the heart will not cleave to them as to scenes it can people with kindred associations; but they will be regarded with a feeling of admiring delight, something between the affection with which we embrace the earth from which they are uplifted, and that mere transient admiration we feel while we watch the clouds with which they mingle.

And yet, contented as I am to enjoy the recollections of Switzerland among the scenes of Britain, there is one place, of all I have gazed on, which I would still hope to revisit. Need I add, that is the valley of Chamouni? Here objects which are most allied to those I first knew and loved, in the softest inland scenery of England, border on the region of the most fantastic glory. Here may an Englishman, thus country-bred, pace the narrow field walks, and muse over the bright stubbles after harvest, awake to all the recollections of childhood—or feel them indistinctly lying at his heart; and then, raising his eyes, revel in the light visions which swarm among the airy heights. To know yet more of Mont Blanc, not again by a vain attempt to reach its summit, but

by following some of the lower paths which glisten in the splendid work of Professor Forbes ; to penetrate the snow-waste to the Jardin ; to ascend the Bréven and the Buet ; and to gaze on the great mountain from the Vale of Aosta, are still things to dream of ; and, parting now from the attempt to retrace my steps on the Continent, with a grateful sense of all I have enjoyed there, I will not abandon the hope, that before the close of that glorious apprenticeship to beauty and grandeur which we are privileged to serve in this beautiful world, I may once more find myself in the full view of Mont Blanc at St. Martin, and again awake the echoes of the Varens by that most delightful of all travelling requisitions—TWO CHARS A-BANC FOR CHAMOUNI !

THE END.


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